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VARIANT READINGS OF THE QUR'AN:

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THEIR HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC ORIGINS

Aḥmad 'Alī al Imām

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Dedication

To the soul of my beloved father, the man who filled me with his devotion to the Qur'an and enlightened me with his wisdom and wide knowledge in spreading the message of the Qur'an, the ever-preserved word of God:

We have, without doubt,
Sent down the Message,
And We will assuredly
Guard it (from corruption).
Qur'an 15:9

The death of my father was a great loss to me, as in his precious and spiritual company I lived the most beautiful days of my life. Indeed to me he was a father, a shaykh, an excellent example for me to follow, a friend and

ولي فيه أستاذ ولي فيه مرشد
ولي فيه قطب ذو اتصال ولي ولي

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*—Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān wa Ma'ālimuh wa Ādābuh.*
Al Awā'il—al 'Askarī, *Al Awā'il.*
Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ—Abū Ḥayyān, *Tafsīr al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ.*
Bayān—al Khū'ī, *Al Bayān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān.*
Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah—Ibn Kathīr, *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah fī al Tārīkh.*
Al Budūr al Zāhirah—al Qāḍī, *Al Budūr al Zāhirah fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr al Mutawātirah min Ṭarīqay al Shāṭibiyyah wa al Durrī.*
Bukhārī—al Bukhārī, *Al Jāmi' al Ṣaḥīḥ* or *Saḥīḥ al Bukhārī.*
Bulūgh al Amānī—al Bannā, *Bulūgh al Amānī min Asrār al Fatḥ al Rabbānī.*
Burhān—al Zarkashī, *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān.*
Concluding Essay—Jeffery, *Concluding Essay on the Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān.*
Ḍayf, *Al 'Asr al Jāhilī*—Ḍayf, *Tārīkh al Adab al 'Arabī: Al 'Aṣr al Jāhilī.*
Dhawq al Ḥalāwah—al Ghamarī, *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah bi Bayān Imtinā' Naskh al Tilāwah.*
Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al Khaṭṭ al 'Arabī—al Munajjid, *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al Khaṭṭ al 'Arabī mundh Bidāyatih ilā Nihāyat al 'Aṣr al Umawī.*
E.I.[1], E.I.[2]—*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st and 2nd editions.
Fatāwā—Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā Shaykh al Islām Ibn Taymiyyah.*
Fatḥ al Bārī—Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī.*
Al Fihrist—al Nadīm, *Kitāb al Fihrist.*
Fück, *al 'Arabiyyah*—Fück, *Al 'Arabiyyah Dirāsāt fī al Lahajāt wa al Asālīb.*
Funūn al Afnān—Ibn al Jawzī, *Funūn al Afnān fī 'Uyūn 'Ulūm al Qur'ān.*
Gharā'ib al Qur'ān—al Nīsābūrī, *Tafsīr Gharā'ib al Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al Furqān.*
Ghāyat al Nihāyah—Ibn al Jazarī, *Ghāyat al Nihāyah fī Ṭabaqāt al Qurrā' Dhawī al Dirāyah.*
Ghayth al Naf'—al Ṣafāqisī, *Ghayth al Naf' fī al Qirā'āt al Sab'.*
Al Ḥākim—al Ḥākim, *Al Mustadrak 'alā al Ṣaḥīḥayn.*
Ibānah—al Qaysī, *Al Ibānah 'an Ma'āni al Qirā'āt.*
Īḍāḥ—Ibn al Anbārī, *Kitāb Īḍāḥ al Waqf wa-al Ibtidā' fī Kitāb Allāh 'Azza wa Jall.*
Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*—Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al Qur'ān al 'Aẓīm.*

Ibrāz al Ma'ānī—Abū Shāmah, *Ibrāz al Ma'ānī min Ḥirz al Amānī.*
Al 'Iqd al Farīd—Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al 'Iqd al Farīd.*
Al Iqtirāḥ—al Suyūṭī, *Al Iqtirāḥ fī Uṣūl al Naḥw.*
Irshād al Sārī—al Qasṭallānī, *Irshād al Sārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī.*
Al Istī'āb—Ibn 'Abd al Barr, *Al Istī'āb fī Ma'rifat al Aṣḥāb.*
Itḥāf—al Dimyāṭī, *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al Bashar bi Qirā'āt al Arba'at 'Ashar.*
Itqān—al Suyūṭī, *Al Itqān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān.*
Al Kalimāt al Ḥisān—al Muṭī'ī, *Al Kalimāt al Ḥisān fī al Ḥurūf al Sab'ah wa Jam' al Qur'ān.*
Al Kāmil—Ibn al Athīr, *Al Kāmil fī al Tārīkh.*
Kanz al Ma'ānī—al Ja'barī, *Kanz al Ma'ānī fī Sharḥ Ḥirz al Amānī wa Wajh al Tahānī.*
Kashf al Ẓunūn—Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al Ẓunūn 'an Asāmī al Kutub wa al Funūn.*
Al Kashshāf—al Zamakhsharī, *Al Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al Ta'wīl.*
Kitāb al Sab'ah—Ibn Mjuāhid, *Kitāb al Sab'ah fī al Qirā'āt.*
Kitāb al Zīnah—al Rāzī, *Kitāb al Zīnah fī al Kalimāt al Islāmiyyah al 'Arabiyyah.*
Khizānat al Adab—al Khaṭīb al Baghdādī, *Khizānat al Adab wa Lubb Lubāb Lisān al 'Arab.*
al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*—al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān al Karīm wa Gharā'ib Rasmih wa Ḥukmih.*
Lane—Lane, *Madd al Qāmūs: Arabic-English Lexicon.*
Laṭā'if, al Qasṭallānı—*Laṭā'if al Ishārāt li Funūn al Qirā'āt.*
Lisān al 'Arab—Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al 'Arab.*
Mabānī Anon.—ed. Jeffery, *Kitāb al Mabānī fī Naẓm al Ma'ānī* (See Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān).*
Ma' al Maṣāḥif—Yūsuf Ibrāhīm al Nūr, *Ma' al Maṣāḥif.*
Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyya fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān al Karīm—Goldziher, *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyya fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān al Karīm,* translated from the German (Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung) by 'Alī Ḥasan 'Abd al Qādir.
Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī—Goldziher, *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islamī*, translated from the German (Die Rictungen der Islamischen Korana-uslegung), by 'Abd al Ḥalīm al Najjār.
Madrasat al Kūfah—al Makhzūmī, *Madrasat al Kūfah wa Manhajuhā fī Dirāsat al Lughah wa-al Naḥw.*
Mafātīḥ al Ghayb—al Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb.*
Manāhil—al Zurqānī, *Manāhil al 'Irfān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān.*
Marātib al Naḥwiyyīn—al Ḥalabī, *Marātib al Naḥwiyyīn.*
Ma'rifat al Qurrā' al Kibār—al Dhahabī, *Ma'rifat al Qurrā' al Kibār 'alā al Ṭabaqāt wa al A'ṣār.*
Al Maṣāḥif—Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif.*

Materials—Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān.*
Miftāḥ al Sa'ādah—Ṭāshkubrī Zādah, *Miftāḥ al Sa'ādah wa Miṣbāḥ al Siyādah fī Mawḍū'āt al 'Ulūm.*
Al Muhadhdhab—Muḥaysin, *Al Muhadhdhab fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr wa Tawjīhuhā min Lughat al 'Arab.*
Al Muḥarrar al Wajīz—Abū Shāmah, *Al Murshid al Wajīz ilā 'Ulūm Tata'allaq bi al Kitāb al 'Azīz.*
Al Muḥkam—al Dānī, *Al Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al Maṣāḥif.*
Al Muḥtasib—Ibn Jinnī, *Al Muḥtasib fī Tabyīn Wujūh Shawādhdh al Qirā'āt wa al Īḍāḥ 'anhā.*
Mu'jam mā Ista'jam—al Bakrī, *Mu'jam mā Ista'jam min Asmā' al Bilād wa al Mawāḍi'.*
Mukhtaṣar—Ibn Khālawayh, *Al Mukhtaṣar fī Shawādah al Qirā'āt.*
Munjid—Ibn al Jazarī, *Munjid al Muqri'īn wa Murshid al Ṭālibīn.*
Muqaddimatān—ed. Jeffery, *Muqaddimatān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān.*
Al Muqni'—al Dānī, *Al Muqni' fī Rasm Maṣāḥif al Amṣār.*
Mushkil Āthār—al Ṭaḥāwī, *Mushkil Āthār.*
Musnad—Ibn Ḥanbal, *Al Musnad.*
Al Muzhir—al Suyūṭī, *Al Muzhir fī al Lughah wa Anwā'iha.*
Al Naqd al Taḥlīlī—al Ghamrāwī, *Al Naqd al Taḥlīlī li Kitāb fī al Adab al Jāhilī.*
al Nasā'ī—al Nasa'ī, *Sunan al Nasā'ī, al Mujtabā.*
Nashr—Ibn al Jazarī, *Al Nashr fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr.*
Al Naskh fī al Qur'ān al Karīm—Abū Zayd: *Al Naskh fī al Qur'ān al Karīm: Dirāsah Tashrī'iyyah Tārīkhiyyah Naqdiyyah.*
Nihāyah—Ibn al Athīr, *Al Nihāyah fī Gharīb al Ḥadith wa al Athar.*
Nukat al Intiṣār—Ibn al Bāqillāni, *Nukat al Intiṣār li Naql Maṣāḥif al Amṣār.*
Qāmūs—al Fayrūzābādī, *Al Qāmūs al Muḥīṭ.*
Al Qirā'āt al Mashhūrah—Ibn Ḥazm, *Al Qirā'āt al Mashhūrah fī al Amṣār al Ātiyah Majī' al Tawātur.*
Qurṭubī—al Qurṭubī, *Al Jāmi' li Aḥkām al Qur'ān.*
Al Rawḍ al Unuf—al Suhaylī, *Al Rawḍ al Unuf fī Sharḥ al Sīrah al Nabawiyyah li Ibn Hishām.*
Al Riyāḍ al Mustaṭābah—al 'Āmirī, *Al Riyāḍ al Mustaṭābah fī Jumlat Man Rawā fī al Ṣaḥīḥayn min al Ṣaḥābah.*
Rūḥ al Ma'ānī—al Alūsī, *Rūḥ al Ma'ānī fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān al 'Aẓīm wa al Sab' al Mathānī.*
Al Ṣāḥibī—Ibn Zakariyyā, *Al Ṣāḥibī.*
Sharḥ al Sunnah—al Baghawī, *Sharḥ al Sunnah.*
al Shifā—al Qāḍī 'Iyād, *Al Shifā' bi Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al Muṣṭafā.*
Sīrat Ibn Hishām—Ibn Hishām, *Al Sīrah al Nabawiyyah.*
Sīrat Ibn Isḥāq—Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat Ibn Isḥāq.*
Ṣubḥ al A'shā—al Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al Inshā.*
Sunan Abī Dāwūd—Abū Dāwūd al Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd.*
Sunan Ibn Mājah—Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah.*

Ṭabaqāt al Ḥuffāẓ—al Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al Ḥuffāẓ*.
Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*—al Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al Qur'ān*.
Tadhkirat al Ḥuffāẓ—al Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al Ḥuffāẓ*.
Tafsīr al Khams Mi'at Āyah—Muqātil, *Tafsīr al Khams Mi'at Āyah min al Qur'ān fī al Amr wa al Nahy wa al Ḥalāl wa al Ḥarām*.
Tafsīr al Manār—Riḍā, *Tafsīr al Qur'ān al Ḥakīm*.
Tafsīr al Marāghī—al Marāghī, *Tafsīr al Marāghī*.
Tafsīr al Qummī—al Qummī, *Tafsīr al Qummī*.
Tārīkh al Ṭabarī—al Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al Rusul wa al Mulūk*.
Tārīkh al Ya'qūbī, al Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al Ya'qūbī*.
Tartīb al Musnad—al Bannā, *Al Fatḥ al Rabbānī li Tartīb Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal al Shaybānī*.
Al Taṭawwur al Naḥwī—Bergstraesser, *Al Taṭawwur al Naḥwī li al Lughah al 'Arabiyyah*.
Ta'wīl—Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mushkil al Qur'ān*.
Thimār al Qulūb—al Tha'ālibī, *Thimār al Qulūb fī al Muḍāf wa al Manṣūb*.
Al Tamhīd—Ibn al Bāqillānī, *Al Tamhīd fī al Radd 'alā al Mu'aṭṭilah wa al Rāfiḍah wa al Khawārij wa al Mu'tazilah*.
Al Tibyān—al Nawawī, *Al Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalat al Qur'ān*.
al Ṭūsī, *al Tibyān*—al Ṭūsī, *Al Tibyān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*.
al Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*—al Wāqidī, *Kitāb al Maghāzī*.

FOREWORD

This book has multiple significance and is related to diverse fields of interest. Therefore, its subject occupies a distinctive place in the field of Qur'anic studies in particular, and Islamic studies in general. Moreover, this is a subject that, at times transcends the field of essential or fundamental Islamic studies and moves into the sphere of subjects like language, rhetoric, and logic.

There are a number of possible approaches to deal with this subject, and it is essential to distinguish between them and then to choose the best. For example, one may study the relationship between the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet; the essential differences between the Book and the Sunnah; the Arabic language and its capacity for expressing, with power, divine revelation; the extent to which the human tongue is capable of dealing with a language that served as a conduit for the Divine, in terms of the ease or difficulty of pronunciation or understanding; or its capacity to deal with, and to comprehend, the changes that inevitably occur in the organization, style, expressiveness, and inimitability of languages.

Some of the most important issues to be dealt with in this field have come to us through hadith narrations of varying degrees of authenticity (or the lack thereof), particularly those concerning the plurality of Qur'anic recitations, the ways that these were passed down, and the relative renown of each. Witness, for example, the hadith concerning the "seven letters" and the many different narrations in its support. Thus, it is fitting that our approach to this book be the study of the relationship between the Blessed Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet. In doing so, I hope that I may provide a framework from which to read and understand this book appropriately.

Imam Shafi'i defined the relationship between the Book and the Sunnah in a very precise manner, though most scholars, owing to their preoccupation with jurisprudence, have not paid attention to the subtleties in his definition. Thus, most interpretations of Imam Shafi'i's definition of that relationship are less than satisfactory. In his work on jurisprudence, *Al Risalāh,* Imam Shafi'i explained the place of the Sunnah in terms of eluci-

dation, or *bayan*. As such, the Sunnah represents one form among many that brings lucidity to the Qur'an. At times, the Qur'an is perfectly clear, immediately apparent, and requires no further elucidation. At other times, the meaning of its verses is explained by other verses, or the meaning is interpreted over the course of time. In most instances, however, the meaning is clarified by means of the Sunnah, either by word or in deed. This is because the basic function of the Sunnah is to elucidate. Furthermore, the elucidator is subservient to the elucidated which, in this case, equates with the text of the Qur'an.

Imam Shafi'i affirmed that the Qur'anic text occupies the highest possible place and that nothing can compare or compete with it (in terms of its significance) other than something that is equal to it (i.e., another verse from the Qur'an). He then went on to generate a number of particular instances from this principle, although owing to their intricacies, many of these, too, were misunderstood. Then, given his understanding of the relationship, and his limiting the concept of "text" or *naṣṣ* to the Qur'an alone, he relegated the Sunnah, by considering it the Qur'an's elucidator, to second place. Therefore, when the Sunnah is subsequent to the Qur'an, following it in rank, it will not be capable of abrogating the verses of the Qur'an because the Qur'an is principal to it. In other words, the Sunnah cannot abrogate the Qur'an because it, the Sunnah, is not the Qur'an's equal. Rather, the Sunnah is subservient to the Qur'an and may not rise to a place higher than to elucidate the Qur'an.

In this way, Imam Shafi'i solidified the relationship between the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Qur'an is principal to the Sunnah, and serves to verify it; whereas the Sunnah will not go beyond the Qur'an, but revolves about its axis, and derives its own legitimacy from it. It is not the place of the elucidator, then, to abrogate the elucidated, do away with it, damage it, pass over it, add to it, subtract from it, or do anything other than elucidate it. The elucidator elucidates and nothing more.

Imam Shafi'i's defense of the Sunnah was, in every case, to maintain its status as a *bayan* or an elucidator. Most of the challenges he faced came from people whose intention was to disengage entirely the Sunnah from the Qur'an by stirring up issues pertaining to authenticity, like *tawatur*, and meaning, like *qaṭ'* and *ẓann*, so as to drive a wedge between the text of the Qur'an and its elucidation through the Sunnah of the Prophet. In his works, like *Al Risālah, Mukhtalif al Ḥadīth*, and *Jamā' al 'Ilm*, Imam Shafi'i focussed on this objective. The Qur'an's sovereignty and its primacy were very clear in his mind. It was for this reason that, when the Imam turned to jurisprudence, he placed the Sunnah in a subservient role. Thus,

he considered the Sunnah the second source for legislation in cases where there was no apparent teaching from the Qur'an. In cases where such a teaching existed, and the Sunnah acted to elucidate the Qur'an, there was no need for discussion of rank, or to relegate the Sunnah to second place, or third. So the position adopted by Imam Shafi'i on the matter was intended to cement the foundation of the Sunnah as elucidation.

When we come to the issue at hand, or what the Sunnah has brought to us concerning variant Qur'anic recitations, and in particular the matter of the Qur'an's having been "revealed in seven letters," we may begin to discuss these things from the perspective outlined above. In this manner, we may hope, Allah willing, to reach something that we can agree on.

As the Qur'an attempts to erect a stable relationship between itself and human beings on the one hand, and between itself and the universe on the other, it is distinguished from every other sort of discourse known to humans by the uniqueness of its syntax and composition. It is also distinguished by the ways in which it was communicated to humans. The Qur'an was revealed to an unlettered Prophet who realized that the only means he possessed for its preservation was his memory or his own powers of retention. Thus, you see him receiving the text and then exerting himself to the utmost so as not to lose even a single letter or syllable. And this is despite the repeated assurances of the Almighty that He will preserve the message, and have it recited to the Prophet (by the angel Jibril [Gabriel]) so that he will remember it, and that Allah will posit the message in the Prophet's heart and preserve it there, and then explain it to him. The only responsibility the Prophet had in the matter was to give himself wholly to receiving and accepting the message. Thereafter, the Divine Revealer Himself would be responsible for collecting and ordering the Qur'an, for having it recited to the Prophet, and for explaining everything about it. The Prophet had only to receive the message. However, after the Qur'an was received he had to implement its principles and provide a living example of its teachings so as to fully elucidate its meanings.

Indeed, there is a major difference between writing down what is dictated and reciting what is revealed. Dictation may be received while the memory is at rest; all that someone is concerned with is the faithful transfer between what is heard and what is written. However, when the function is to memorize by heart everything that is heard, so as to carry the Divine message to others by means of recitation and then to have it written down, that is clearly an entirely different matter! Under such circumstances, the senses, the heart, the conscious self, the mind, and the memory are in a state of interaction with the text, and in a state of extreme exer-

tion. Under these circumstances, the message very nearly becomes a part of the listener. In this manner, the instant that the Prophet hears the revelation, the battle for control of the message is immediately settled. Thereafter, the functions of recitation, delivery, and transcribing are facilitated. Likewise, it becomes easier to direct the discourse to others. In this manner, at the moment of revelation, the dialectic of text and human intellect is also settled.

In addition, the oral transmission of the Message affords those who hear it with the opportunity to familiarize their tongues with it, not to mention their hearts and minds. Then, within the framework of oral transmission and narration, the recited text will sometimes allow for the plurality of recitations. Certain tribes, for example, had become accustomed to pronouncing the "a" equivalent shaded toward the "e" equivalent, while other tribes were pronouncing doubled consonants singly, and singled consonants doubly, without changing the meaning. The oral environment surrounding the text lended itself to this sort of reasonable latitude and promoted a sense of congeniality and familiarity which lead to the sharing of common ground between the text and those who accepted it. At the same time, the text retained its primacy over the language in which it had been revealed, both in general and in terms of its various dialects. In this way, the text made the language its mouthpiece, and prepared it for service in promoting understanding of the text and its subsequent interpretation. It is from this vantage point that we may view the issue of the Qur'an's "facilitation" by the Almighty, as articulated in the verse:

> We made this Qur'an easy to bear in mind; who, then, is willing to take it to heart? (54:17)

Later, came the stage of recorded entry and composition by way of preparation for the emergence of the text and its transition from oral transmission to book form, circulated and standardized. Thus began a new stage of interaction with the text—between the text and humankind on the one hand, and the text and historical reality on the other. Thus, the text of the Qur'an became capable of encompassing the entire universe in a comprehensive and absolute manner. To establish such an inimitable relationship between its letters and the universe, the Qur'an's revelation took twenty-three years to complete. This was followed by a period of oral transmission, and then a period of collecting what was kept and memorized in the hearts of people and recording it in writing until the Qur'an appeared in the form of a book to be read by people and circulated among them until it came to settle in their hearts and minds.

The Qur'an set in motion a process of change that very few are able to comprehend. This was predicated on the concept I call "the integrating of the two readings," i.e., the reading of the text and the reading of the real existential. And this is what constituted the methodology for the true recitation of the Qur'an. It is very difficult for readers to discover the meanings of the Qur'an within a framework in which precedence is given to a single recitation, or to a single dimension, like the historical dimension with its emphasis on the occasions of revelation, or the legal dimension, and so on. In fact, there is no end to the dimensions of the Qur'an, and there is no way to begin to understand these without having an appreciation for the subtle affinities between the Qur'an and humankind, and between the Qur'an and the universe. The first recipient of the Qur'an, the Prophet, understood this matter completely, and employed this comprehensive methodology in the process of delivering the Qur'an to the Ummah so that they, in turn, would be able to carry it to all of humankind.

Thus, the Prophet reviewed with the angel Jibril whatever was revealed to him. Then, once a year, they would review all that had been revealed to date. This continued every year until the year of the Prophet's death, during which they reviewed the entire revelation twice. By means of these reviews, they made completely certain that all components of the Qur'an were right, that all of the letters in all of the words were correct, that the order of words in the verses was correct, that the verses were placed correctly in the right chapters, that the chapters were in the right order, and that the Qur'an was placed correctly in regard to humankind and the universe. The Qur'an is the guide that does not stray or err, does not ignore or overlook. It teaches *tawḥīd* to those who are made *khulafā'* over the earth, and purifies them so that they may be able to assume their responsibilities, be successful in the test of life, and achieve the goal of edifying or making the earth a better place. As such, the Qur'an is the book of the universe, and by means of it one may "read" the universe, interpret it, and clarify the dimensions essential to a productive life in it. Likewise, the universe clarifies, elucidates, and interprets the Qur'an. In the universe there are signs for those who believe, and in the Qur'an there are signs for those who will consider them.

So, it was within the framework of facilitating the Qur'an for remembrance in the period of oral transmission that the issue of multiple readings arose. This occurred even before the revelation was completed, before the final review by the Prophet and Jibril, and before the Prophet presented the final compilation after rearranging the order of the Book at the direction of the Almighty. Within the same framework, too, the Prophet discouraged

his Companions from writing anything along with the Qur'an. The reason for this discouragement is not as many have supposed, i.e., to prevent the contamination of the Qur'an's verses with outside material, because the Arabs of those days were all too able to distinguish between the rhetoric of the Qur'an and that of anything else. Rather, the point in doing so was to give the Ummah an opportunity to interact with the Qur'an exclusively, and to allow it to work on their hearts and minds so that everything they encountered in their lives would be secondary to the Qur'an. Moreover, within the framework of the Almighty's pledge to preserve the Qur'an and protect it, He endowed it with the sort of rhetoric and eloquence that was clearly beyond the ability of humans to produce.

In the same vein, the Qur'an was made primary to the Arabic language, and never gave Arabic the opportunity to assume primacy over it. There is a great difference between using the Arabic language to understand the syntax used in the Qur'an, and the meanings of its vocabulary to assist in hermeneutics and assigning primacy to the Arabic language over the Qur'an, or attempting to make the Qur'an subordinate to the language. It is unacceptable to say that it is possible to exchange a word for its synonym, or one expression for another way of saying the same thing, even if one is convinced that the meaning is exactly the same as intended by the Almighty. This is because the word used in the Qur'an is of Divine origin and the word supposed to be synonymous with it is of human origin. What a great difference there is between the human and the Divine!

The Arabs preserved their poetry by means of its meter and rhyme. Furthermore, every Arab was able to detect in an instant any sort of error that may occur in that poetry. For example, the meter may be broken, the rhyme incorrect, the form mistaken, or the feet mismatched. The Qur'an goes beyond Arabic poetry and prose in its syntax and style. This is what constitutes the internal safeguard of the Qur'an and the guarantee that no errors will occur in its text. This is why the Qur'anic scholar, al Zamulkani, wrote:

> The inimitability of Qur'an goes back to the particular way it was composed, not to the composition itself. Its vocabulary is balanced in terms of its syntax and etymology. And its constructs impart the most sublime meanings.

Ibn Aṭīyah wrote:

> The correct opinion and the one held by the majority of scholars in regard to the inimitability of the Qur'an is that it is due to the Qur'an's syntax and its veracity. This is because the Almighty's knowledge encompasses everything, and His knowledge encompasses all forms of discourse. Thus, in arranging the wording of the Qur'an, the Almighty knew exactly which word was best suited to follow the one before it, and which word best yielded the intended meaning. The Book of Allah is such that if a word were removed from it, and then the entire Arabic lexicon were searched for a better word, it would never be found.

In what follows I shall quote from the *tafsīr* of Fakhr al Dīn al Rāzī in which he relates an interesting account of a discussion concerning the "irregular recitations."

Al Wāḥidī narrated that in the Qur'anic recension by 'Abd Allah, concerning the verse "and if You forgive them, then truly You are mighty and wise" (5:118):

> I heard my Shaykh and my father, may Allah show him mercy, say "'mighty and wise' in this verse, was better than 'forgiving and mercy-giving' because the Almighty's being forgiving and mercy-giving correlates to the state that brings about His forgiveness and mercy for all those in need of it. Might and wisdom, however, do not correlate to forgiveness. Allah's might implies that if He is truly mighty, and far above concern with normal considerations as to what people really deserve when He decides to forgive, then His kindness is greater than if He is described as forgiving and mercy-giving, descriptions which lead naturally to forgiveness and mercy. Thus, his interpretation, may Allah show him mercy, was to say: 'He is the mightiest of all, and still His wisdom mandates mercy.' This is perfection at its greatest."

> Others have opined that if the verse had read: "and if You forgive them, then truly You are the forgiving and the mercy-giving," this would have imparted the meaning that He was going to intercede for them. But, when the verse read: "then truly You are mighty and wise," the meaning was clear that he (the speaker represented in the verse) meant to leave the matter entirely to the Almighty, and chose not to have anything to do with it at all.

The author of *Al Durr al Maṣūn fī 'Ulūm al Kitāb al Maknūn* repeated what was narrated concerning the ending of the verse mentioned above in the recension of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd, i.e., "then truly You are the Forgiving, the Mercy-giving." Commenting on the verse "and if You forgive them, then truly You are mighty and wise," he wrote:

> Similar examples (of this sort of rhetoric) have already been mentioned. In the popular recitations and the recension in peoples' hands, it reads: "mighty and wise," whereas in the recension of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd it reads: "forgiving and mercy-giving." Certain people with no understanding of the Arabic language have trifled with this verse saying: "The most suitable version is the one in Ibn Mas'ūd's recension." Evidently, this person was unaware that the meaning is linked to the two conditions (preceding the last part of the verse). This is explained by what Abū Bakr al Anbārī wrote when he narrated this [irregular] recitation on the authority of certain critics: "Whenever the meaning is construed in the way that this critic has reported, the meaning loses vitality. This is because he attempts to limit 'the forgiving and mercy-giving' to the second condition only; such that it has nothing to do with the first condition. In fact, it is well known that the meaning is connected to both conditions, the first as well as the second. This is how Allah revealed the verse, and this is the consensus recitation of all Muslims. The summary of the verse, then, is as follows: If you punish them, then You are mighty and wise, and if Your forgive them, then You are mighty and wise, in both cases, whether in punishment or in forgiveness. Thus, it is as if 'mighty and wise' is more fitting in this place because of its generality, and because it combines both conditions. On the other hand, 'forgiving and mercy-giving' is clearly unsuitable as a carrier of the general meaning carried by 'mighty and wise.'"

To my way of thinking, Al Anbārī's comments are subtle indeed. Clearly, he does not mean, when he writes, "it is well known that the meaning is connected to both conditions" that the connection is made by having the last part of the verse, i.e., "mighty and wise" act in the grammatical sense as the *jawāb al sharṭ* (apodosis) to both conditions. Clearly, this is contrary to the grammatical rules of the Arabic language because, grammatically speaking, the first condition (i.e., "If You punish them") already has its answer (i.e., "then they are Your servants"). In grammatical terms, this is the anwer corresponding to the first condition in the verse. A servant is subject to his master's doing with him as the master sees fit. Rather, what Al Anbārī meant was that the connection to the two condi-

tions was a connection of meaning. The scholars have had a great deal to say in regard to this verse, but this is not the place to dwell on their discussions of the subject. Rather, I mention it only as it pertains to the matter of irregular and variant recitations of the Qur'an.

If substituting two of the Almighty's names "Forgiving" and "Mercy-giving" for "Mighty" and "Wise" led to such controversy, then what of the exchange of other words, or letters, especially when they are particles of meaning, or when they effect the level of the Qur'an's eloquence, its rhetorical effectiveness, or its syntax, or its meaning?

In view of the above, it can be stated with confidence that regarding the revelation of the Qur'an "in seven letters" justification for substituting any of the Qur'an's words with their synonyms is completely unacceptable. The most that can be imagined in this regard is that when the Islamic sciences were being recorded (*'aṣr al tadwīn*), Muslim scholars related *aḥādīth* and lesser narrations concerning the "irregular recitations," then authenticated and classified them as *mutawātir*, or *āḥād*, or *shādhdhah*, they did so on the understanding that these represented the transformation of oral transmissions to the written state. Therefore, I feel that the most likely explanation for what happened during that time is that Allah granted a degree of latitude to those whose tongues were not yet accustomed to the dialect of the original revelation. These popular oral recitations were recorded as "irregular recitations" in precisely the ways that they were recited. Thereafter, subsequent generations of scholars continued to relate these narrations as *aḥādīth* without stopping to consider that they were recording something that was never intended to be anything other than oral. Later, the orientalists attempted to erect, on the basis of these narrations, an entire edifice of hearsay and doubt in regard to the text of the Qur'an and its integrity.

The importance of the present work stems from its attempt to identify the issues and reopen the door for their examination in the light of new scholarship, thereby removing doubts that have arisen. This study also draws its importance from the fact that the author is a Muslim Arab scholar whose specialization is Qur'anic studies. There are many studies on the subject in the English language, but they lack the authority of Islamic scholarship. It is well known, moreover, that the number of people pursuing Islamic studies in English increases significantly every day regardless of whether they are researchers, graduate students in Western universities, or others with an interest in the study of Islam.

It is my hope that this book will fill an important void in the current literature on Islam in English, and that it will motivate scholars to undertake more studies and research into the issues the book deals with.

It is Allah who knows our intentions and it is He who guides us to the right path!

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INTRODUCTION

From the earliest years of my life, I have been aware of the variation in reading among the *Qurrā'* of the Qur'an because of the existence of three dominant readings in Sudan—the *muṣḥaf* for one of these readings, *Al Dūrī 'an Abī 'Amr*, having been published for the first time in Sudan in 1978.

The following chapters investigate the reasons behind these variations and the origins of the *qirā'āt*. I have studied the nature of the seven *aḥruf* in which the Qur'an has been revealed and concluded that they represent seven linguistical variations, reflecting various dialects of the Arabs in ways of reciting the Qur'an. The *aḥādīth* that substantiate the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* are found to be sound and successive (*mutawātir*).

This book studies the status of the Qur'an and its oral and written history during the Prophet's lifetime, the compilation of Abū Bakr, and the further compilation of 'Uthmān which became predominant throughout the *amṣār* (the Islamic lands), after copies of it were dispatched and accompanied by distinguished *Qurrā'*. At the same time, personal manuscripts that did not correspond with the 'Uthmānic *maṣaḥif* ceased to exist. The development of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* is traced down to the printed *maṣāḥif* of our present day, with the conclusion that they represent the unaltered text of the Qur'an. I discuss various issues in a critical way, refuting the many allegations concerning the text of the Qur'an and the *maṣāḥif* to demonstrate its completeness and trustworthiness.

Having studied the relationship between the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and the seven *aḥruf*, I have concluded that the *maṣāḥif*, which include what is transmitted by *tawātur*, accommodate either all or some of the *aḥruf* that correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmanic *maṣāḥif*.

I have investigated the question of the language of the Qur'an in ancient sources as well as in modern linguistical studies and believe that the text of the Qur'an reflects the influence of various dialects of the Arabs. The scholars disagreed in identifying the most fluent dialects of the

Arabs according to their criteria for fluency. I have attempted to distinguish between *lughah* and *lahjah* in ancient sources and modern studies.

Indeed, the language of the Qur'an represents the common spoken literary language of the Arabs, which is based on all their dialects, with a predominance of Qurayshī features.

The origins of the *qirā'āt* date back to the teaching of the Prophet, although variations in readings are noticed only after the Hijrah in Madīnah and resulted in order to facilitate the reading of the Qur'an among the various Arab tribes that had entered Islam. In this respect, I found that whenever the Companions differed in reading among themselves, they supported their reading by referring it to the teachings of the Prophet. This method continued into the following generation. The book studies the conditions for the accepted readings along with their development. The readings that satisfy the conditions for an accepted reading and those that lack one or more of the conditions are studied, together with the classes of readings.

The forebears of the *qirā'āt* and the effect of Ibn Mujāhid's *Al Sab'ah* on the following generation are discussed, together with a survey of books composed on the subject of the *qirā'āt.*

The *ikhtiyār* in reading among the qualified *Qurrā'* of the Qur'an is governed by the conditions for accepted readings. Thus, the *Qurrā'* did not have a free hand in their selection, and the theory of reading the Qur'an in accordance with the meaning is shown to be groundless.

The orthography of the *maṣaḥif* is intended to preserve the soundly transmitted and authentic reading, never to initiate or create a reading. Because certain accepted readings are objected to by some philologists and grammarians, some examples are studied. I conclude that they are sound and accepted readings because of their sound transmission, fluency, and correspondence with various Arab dialects.

In addition, the study emphasizes that there are no grammatical or orthographical errors in the 'Uthmānic *maṣaḥif.* And moreover, the sound, accepted readings, although differing in meaning, never contradict each other.

In the conclusion, I briefly review the main issues covered in the seven chapters of this book.

In the present study I have relied on various standard books in manuscript and printed form on *qirā'āt* and the sciences of the Qur'an (*'ulūm al Qur'ān*), *tafsīr,* hadith, history, grammar, and Arabic studies.

In the *qirā'āt* and the sciences of the Qur'an, I have mainly benefited from Abū 'Ubaydah's *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*; Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al Sab'ah*; al Dānī's *Al Taysīr fī al Qirā'āt al Sab', Al Muqni' fī Rasm Maṣāḥif*

al Amṣār, and *Al Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al Maṣāḥif*; Ibn al Bāqillānī's *Nukat al Intiṣār*; Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib al Qaysī's *Al Ibānah 'an Ma'ānī al Qirā'āt* and *Al Kashf 'an Wujūh al Qirā'āt al Sab'*; Ibn al Jazarī's *Al Nashr* and *Munjid al Muqri'īn*; al Qasṭallānī's *Laṭa'if al Ishārāt*; al Zarkashī's *Al Burhān;* and al Suyūṭī's *al Itqān.* In fact, they are used most in discussions about the meaning of the seven *aḥruf* and their relation to the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, the personal manuscripts, and their end, which formed the origins of *qirā'āt.*

In the field of *tafsīr,* we have used the books of al Ṭabarī, al Zamakhsharī, al Rāzī, al Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, and Ibn Kathīr to interpret certain verses that are read in various ways and that support certain accepted readings and grammatical arguments concerning other readings.

As regards the substantiation of the revelation of the Qur'an in the seven *aḥruf*, the compilation of the Qur'an, the arrangement of surahs and verses, and the problem of *naskh*, I have benefited from the standard books on the literature of hadith, mainly from Bukhārī, Muslim, and other canonical works, *Al Muwaṭṭā', Al Musnad,* and the four collections of *al Sunan.*

I have used only the authentic *aḥādīth* which are sound in their transmission and context. Furthermore, certain *aḥādīth,* although sound from the point of view of their *asānīd*, are not accepted, because, on the matter of the Qur'an, *tawātur* is always required. In the commentaries on *aḥādīth*, I benefited most from Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī's *Fatḥ al Bārī* and al Baghawī's *Sharḥ al Sunnah.*

In this connection, I have also used al Ṭabārī's *Tārīkh*, Ibn al Athīr's *Al Kāmil,* and Ibn Kathīr's *Al Bidāyah,* particularly in questions and issues relating to the compilation of the Qur'an.

Finally, as regards the language of the Qur'an and the question of fluency and of the most fluent Arab dialect, many primary sources are used, such as Sībawayh's *Al Kitāb*, Ibn Faris' *Al Ṣāḥibī*, Ibn Jinnī's *Al Khaṣā'iṣ,* and al Suyūṭi's *Al Muzhir* and *Al Iqtirāḥ.*

I have used modern studies and have consulted various books that are on different topics and were written in different languages, such as al Alūsī's *Tafsīr,* al Zurqānī's *Manāhil al 'Irfān,* and Ḥammūdah's *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt;* a number of works entitled *Tārīkh al Qur'ān,* composed by Rūstūfadūnī, al Zinjānī, al Kurdī, al Ibyārī, and Shāhīn; al Nūr's *Ma' al Maṣāḥif,* Nöldeke's *Geschichte Des Qur'ān,* and Jeffery's *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān.*

In fact, my primary sources were used mainly to support the views discussed with reference to certain modern works.

Although, I read many books in this field, I will refer only to those cited. The bibliography shows the books that I used.

The importance of this topic in the ancient and modern studies lies in the fact that it concerns the Qur'an, which is the main source of belief and law and the eternal word of God to the believers.

In particular, there is no work in any Western language devoted wholly to the question of *qirā'āt,* despite the great contribution made by Western scholars like Gustavus Fluegel, Otto Pretzl, G. Bergstraesser, and Arthur Jeffery in publishing texts on *qirā'āt.*

In the writings of modern Arab scholars, some like those of Ḥammūdah and al Zurqānī are very helpful, although they deal only with certain aspects of the problem or are devoted to the sciences of the Qur'an in general, rather than the *qirā'āt* specifically. Thus, although what has been written in the field is very extensive, as the bibliography shows, there is still a need for critical studies.

In the present work, I have attempted to study comprehensively and critically the questions relating to my limited topic of the variant readings of the Qur'an and their historical and linguistic origins. I hope this study contributes to our knowledge of the Qur'an, which still deserves a great deal of elucidation.

CHAPTER 1

REVELATION OF THE QUR'AN IN SEVEN *AḤRUF*

From the earliest time, the text of the Qur'an has allowed several equally valid ways of recitation. Several *aḥādīth*, which are often quoted in support of this practice, will be discussed here to find out how and why variant readings existed and also to understand the texts' implications. The following hadith is a good indication of the existence of these various ways of recitation:

> It is narrated by 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Jibril recited the Qur'an to me in one *ḥarf*. Then I requested him (to read it in another *ḥarf*) and continued asking him to recite in other *aḥruf* till he ultimately recited it in seven *aḥruf*. . .[1]

Various *aḥādīth* indicate that whenever a Companion found another Companion reciting the Qur'an in a manner different from the way he had been taught arguments and disagreements would arise. One such event took place between 'Umar Ibn al Khaṭṭāb and Hishām Ibn Ḥakīm, as illustrated in the following hadith:

> It is narrated from 'Umar Ibn al Khaṭṭāb [that] he said: "I heard Hishām Ibn Ḥakīm reciting *Sūrat al Furqān* during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger. I listened to his recitation and noticed that he recited in several different ways which Allah's Messenger had not taught me. I was about to jump on him during his prayer but I controlled my temper. When he had completed his prayer, I put his upper garment around his neck and seized him by it and said, 'Who taught you this surah which I heard you reciting?' He said, 'Allah's Messenger taught it to me.' I said, 'You have told a lie, for Allah's

1. *Bukhārī*, 6:481-82; *Muslim*, 1:561; Muslim added, "Ibn Shihāb al Zuhrī said: 'It has been narrated to me that these seven *aḥruf* are in one meaning and do not differ concerning *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*.'" Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:29, and al Baghawī, *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 1:501.

Messenger has taught it to me in a way different from yours.' So I dragged him to Allah's Messenger and said (to Allāh's Messenger), 'I heard this person reciting *Sūrat al Furqān* in a way which you have not taught me.' On that, Allah's Messenger said, 'Release him (O 'Umar)! Recite O Hishām!' Then he recited in the same way as I heard him reciting. Then Allah's Messenger said, 'It was revealed in this way' and added 'Recite O 'Umar.' I recited it as he had taught me. Allah's Messenger then said, 'It was revealed in this way. This Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven *aḥruf*, so recite of it whichever is easier for you.'"[2]

It would appear from this hadith that the purpose of the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* is to facilitate recitation for Muslims. In fact, the *aḥadīth* make many references to this. The following are some examples:

1. "The Qur'an was sent down in seven *aḥruf*, so recite what seems easy therefrom."[3]
2. "The Prophet (peace be upon him) met Jibril and told him, 'I have been sent to an illiterate people, among them are the old woman, the aged shaykh, the servant and the female servant, and the man who has never read a book.' Then he said to him, 'O Muḥammad, the Qur'an has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*.'"[4]
3. "Verily this Qur'an has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*, so recite at liberty. . . ."[5]
4. "Jibril came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'Allah has commanded you to recite to your people the Qur'an in one *ḥarf*.' Upon this he said, 'I ask for Allah's pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it. . . .'"[6]
5. "Make things easy for my people" or "Make affairs easy for my people."[7]

The revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* to make it easier for the Muslims to understand is confirmed by the following verse:

> And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember. . . (54:17)

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2. *Bukhārī*, 6:482-83; al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:24-25. See also the argument between Ubayy Ibn Ka'b and 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd, and between 'Amr Ibn al 'Āṣ and another, *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:26.
3. *Muslim*, 2:391.
4. Related by Tirmidhī, who says it is a good and sound hadith. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al Tirmidhī*, 14:63; al Baghawī, *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 4:508; and al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:35.
5. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:46.
6. *Muslim*, 2:391.
7. *Ibid.*, 390.

Many commentators point out that it was very difficult for the Arabs, who were—in most cases—an illiterate people with various pronunciations or dialects, to be ordered or even asked to abandon their own dialects and ways of recitation all at once. This was not only difficult to do but also people tried to cling strongly to their dialects.[8]

The permission to recite the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* was given after the Hijrah, as is clear from the following hadith:

> Ubayy Ibn Ka'b reported that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) was near the watering place of Banū Ghifār when Jibril came to him and said, "Allah has commanded you to recite to your people the Qur'an in one *ḥarf*." Upon this he said, "I ask from Allah pardon and forgiveness. My people are not capable of doing it." He then came for the second time and said, "Allah has commanded you that you should recite the Qur'an to your people in two *aḥruf*." Upon this he again said, "I seek pardon and forgiveness from Allah. My people would not be able to do so." He (Jibril) came for the third time and said, "Allah has commanded you to recite the Qur'an to your people in three *aḥruf*." Upon this he said, "I ask pardon and forgiveness from Allah. My people would not be able to do it." He then came to him for the fourth time and said, "Allah has commanded you to recite the Qur'an to your people in seven *aḥruf*, and in whichever they would recite, they would be right."[9]

Aḍāt Banī Ghifār, which is translated as "the watering place of Banū Ghifār," is a place near Madīnah. It is attributed to the Banū Ghifār, because they lived around this tank.[10]

In another version, it is stated that Jibril met the Prophet near Aḥjār al Mirā',[11] which is a place near Qubā' in the countryside around Madīnah.[12]

This does not, however, mean that the part of the Qur'an that was revealed after the Hijrah was the only part to be recited in seven *aḥruf*. This is shown by the previously mentioned argument between 'Umar and Hishām about different versions of *Sūrat al Furqān,* which was revealed in Makkah.[13] Such arguments between the Companions were not accept-

8. Suyūṭī, *Itqān,* 1:136; Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 9:22; Ibn al Jazarī, *Nashr,* 1:22.
9. *Muslim,* 2:391; al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 1:40.
10. *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 9:28; al Qasṭallānī, *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:35; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 1:36; al Bakrī, *Mu'jam mā Ista'jam,* 1:164.
11. Related by Tirmidhī, who says: "It is good and sound hadith." See *Ṣaḥīḥ al Tirmidhī,* 4:61; Aḥmad, *Musnad,* 5:132; Baghawī, *Sharḥ al Sunnah,* 4:508; Ṭabarī, 1:35.
12. See Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 1:35-36. Mujāhid says it is Qubā' itself. See Ibn al Athīr, *al Nihāyah,* 1:203. Al Bakrī in his book *Mu'jam mā Ista'jam,* 1:117, was confused when he mentioned it as in Makkah. In fact, he thought Sujiyy al Sabāb was the same place as Aḥjār al Mirā'.
13. Al Suyūṭī, *Itqān,* vol. I, 27.

able, and so the Prophet himself forbade his Companions to dispute regarding this matter and became angry whenever he found some of them disagreeing about recitation. Once he said:

> Verily this Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven *aḥruf*, in every *ḥarf* you recite you have done so correctly. So do not argue, since this may lead to *kufr*.[14]

There are so many *aḥādīth* about the revelation of the Qur'an in the seven *aḥruf* that Abū 'Ubayd al Qāsim Ibn Sallām (224/838) considered them as *mutawātir aḥādith* (*aḥadith* related through multiple chains of transmission, i.e., successive).[15] Despite this, Goldziher attributes to him the opinion that these *aḥādīth* are *shādhdh* and without an acceptable *isnād*, referring to the *Alif Bā'* of al Balawī.[16] In fact, however, Abū 'Ubayd rejects only one hadith, namely, the one that refers to the seven *aḥruf* as being revealed in seven different meanings (see page 11). The other *aḥādīth* are regarded as *mutawātir*, and he interprets them as referring to seven dialects.[17]

Al Suyūṭī (911/1505) counted the names of the Companions who narrated these *aḥādīth*, and he found twenty.[18]

This fact is supported by another hadith to the effect that 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān asked those present at the mosque of Madīnah if any of them had ever heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say, "The Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven *aḥruf*." In response, a huge number of them stood up and testified that they had heard this hadith. Consequently, 'Uthmān himself emphasized this hadith by stating that he testified with them.[19]

Since all these *aḥruf* were established as correct and sound, the feeling was that they were not a subject for dispute. Hence, it is forbidden to argue on this matter or to favor one *ḥarf* over another. The reason is that

14. Related by Aḥmad, *Musnad*, 4:169-70; *Ṭabarī*, 1:44; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:21; Ibn Kathīr, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 65.
15. *Nashr*, 1:21; *Itqān*, 1:78. In fact, this large number of Companions who narrated these *aḥādīth* must have been the reason for Abū 'Ubayd's considering them as successive *aḥādīth* (*mutawātir*), since this number of people found in the generation of the Companions do not exist among the Successors. Nevertheless, it is a famous and good hadith. See al Zurqānī, *Manāhil al 'Irfān*, 1:132.
16. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 54, quoting al Balawī, *Alif Bā'*, 1:21.
17. See p. 13.
18. *Itqān*, 1:131. Suyūṭī studied the work of Ibn al Jazarī and added two to the nineteen, which the latter had already collected. See *Nashr*, 1:21.
19. *Nashr*, 1:21. Ibn al Jazarī says this hadith is related by al Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ya'lā in his book *al Musnad al Kabīr*; *Itqān*, 1:131.

all the *aḥruf* are sound and that "it has been revealed in this way."[20] Accordingly, everyone should recite as he has been taught.

The Meaning of Seven *Aḥruf* in the *Aḥadīth*

Each group of scholars attempted to clarify the exact meaning of the *aḥruf* mentioned in the *aḥadīth*. This chapter discusses all views given on this matter and then attempts to establish the meaning on the basis of the available evidence. First, however, the meaning of the expression "seven" must be discussed.

A group of scholars say the number "seven" mentioned in the *aḥadith* is not intended as an exact number, but is a symbolic term meaning a considerable number less than ten. Hence, the number seven denotes numerousness in the single figures, just as seventy means numerousness in tens, and seven hundred means numerousness in hundreds. For instance, in the following Qur'anic verses:

> The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of God is that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. God gives manifold increase to whom He pleases. (2:261)

> Whether you ask forgiveness or not (their sin is unforgivable): Even if you ask seventy times forgiveness, God will not forgive them. (9:80)

One hadith says: "Every (good) deed the Son of Adam does will be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold reward."[21] Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī (852/1448) related this saying from 'Iyāḍ (544/1449) and his successors.[22]

However, most scholars maintained that the expression "seven" in the *aḥadith* means precisely the odd number seven that follows the number six and precedes eight in arithmetic. In this respect, we can refer to

20. *Bukhārī*, 6:482; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:26.
21. *Muslim* (Arabic text), 2:480; for the translation of the hadith, see *Mishkāt al Maṣābīḥ*, 2:417.
22. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:23; *Itqān*, 1:131; al Zarkashī also attributed it to certain scholars. See *Burhān*, 1:212. Ibn al Jazarī says in *Nashr*, 1:25-26, "It is said the number seven does not mean the exact meaning. But it means here the numerousness and simplicity." See also the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., 2:1073. Al Rāfi'ī in his book *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 70; Aḥmad 'Ādil Kamāl in his book *'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 85-86; and 'Abd al Ṣabūr in *Tārīkh al Qur'ān* have chosen this opinion.

the following Qur'anic verses in which the number is meant to be the same, neither more nor less.

> To it are seven gates: for each of those gates is a (special) class (of sinners) assigned. (15:44)

> (Yet others) say they were seven, the dog being the eighth. (18:22)

In fact there is no reason for abandoning the exact meaning of the number seven and attempting to interpret it as a metaphorical term. Moreover, the *aḥadith* themselves make clear in various versions that the number seven is intended to be the exact number, neither more nor less. Among those versions are the following:

> . . . and he recited it in other *aḥruf* till he ultimately recited it in seven *aḥruf*."[23]

> . . . then I realized it had been ended in this number."[24]

> The repeated asking for more *aḥruf* between the Prophet and Jibril started from one *ḥarf* to two, three, up to seven.[25]

Thus, most scholars agree that the number is limited and confined to seven specifically. We may conclude, after this discussion, that the number seven mentioned in all versions of these *aḥadith* is the precise number known to the people. The majority accepted that these *aḥadith* indicate that the Qur'an has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*, but differed in explaining and identifying them, and in giving examples.

The Meaning of *Aḥruf* in the Arabic Language

The word *aḥruf* is the plural of *ḥarf*. It is given several meanings in the Arabic lexicons:

1. The extreme, verge, border, margin, brink, brow, side or edge of anything, as, for instance, the bank of a river or side of a ship or boat.[26]

23. *Bukhārī*, 6:482.
24. Related by Nasā'ī. See *Itqān*, 1:131-32.
25. *Muslim*, 2:391.
26. *Qāmūs*, 3:130; *Al Nihāyah fī Gharīb al Ḥadīth*, 1:369; *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:41; *Lane*, book 1, part II, 550.

In this respect we can refer to the saying of Ibn 'Abbās: "People of the Book do not come to the women, except from the side (*illā 'alā ḥarf*)."[27]

The word *ḥarf* occurs in the following Qur'anic verse with the same meaning:

> There are among men some who serve God, as it were, on a *verge:* if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see! (22:11)

2. A letter of the alphabet, the letters being thus called because they are the extremities of the word and the syllable.

Ḥarf also means the edge of a sword or the sharp stone edge of a mountain. A she-camel is described as *ḥarf* if she is hard and sharp like a stone edge.[28]

3. As a grammatical term, it means a particle, i.e., what is used to express a meaning and is neither a noun nor a verb.[29]
4. Mode, manner, or way, as, for instance, in reciting the Qur'an according to seven modes or manners of reading, whence such phrases as *fulān yaqra' bi ḥarf Ibn Mas'ūd* (such a one reads in the manner of Ibn Mas'ūd).[30]
5. A dialect, an idiom, or mode of expression peculiar to certain Arabs. Accordingly, the hadith *"Nazal al Qur'ān 'alā sab'at aḥruf"* would mean, "The Qur'an has been revealed in seven dialects of the dialects of the Arabs." This interpretation is attributed to Abū 'Ubayd, Abū al 'Abbās (291/903), al Azharī (370/980), and Ibn al Athīr (606/1209).[31] Ibn al Athīr considered this interpretation the best one.[32]

The Interpretation of "Seven *Aḥruf*"

As seen above, most scholars say that the number seven mentioned in the *aḥadith* is really meant to be the exact number; however, they differ in interpreting the meaning of the word *aḥruf* because *aḥruf* is a common word that has several meanings that can be determined only by context.[33]

27. *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:42.
28. *Qāmūs*, 3:131; *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:41-42; *Lane*, book I, part II, 550.
29. *Qāmūs*, 3:131; *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:41; *Lane*, book I, part II, 550.
30. *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:41; *Lane*, book I, part II, 550.
31. *Qāmūs*, 3:131; *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:41; *Lane*, book I, part II, 550.
32. *Nihāyah*, 1:369 (see Chapter 5).
33. *Manāhil*, 1:146.

To complicate matters, the context of the *aḥādīth* under discussion allows for more than one interpretation.[34]

This early difference of opinion produced many sayings, all of which are repeated and overlap. Ibn Ḥibbān (354/965) counted thirty-five of them,[35] while al Suyūṭī claimed that there were about forty, although he did not quote all of them.[36]

A comprehensive study and comparison of all the views and opinions expressed concerning these *aḥādith* allows us to summarize and arrange them as follows:

1. They are ambiguous and their meaning cannot be known with certainty because the word *ḥarf* has different meanings: a letter of the alphabet, a word, a meaning, or a way.

This is the view of Ibn Sa'dān al Naḥwī (231/845).[37] This view has been opposed on the ground that a common word can be known and fixed according to the context. For instance, the word *'ayn* has more than one meaning that can be realized and identified in the sentence in which it occurs. Examples are "*Naẓartu bi al 'ayn al mujarradah*" and "*Sharibtu min 'ayn Zubaydah.*" The meaning is clear and unambiguous. In the first sentence, the word *'ayn* means "eye," and in the second sentence it means "water". This is made clear by the use of the word *naẓartu* (I have seen) in the first sentence and the word *sharibtu* (I have drunk) in the second sentence.[38]

2. The word *ḥarf* may mean "ways of pronunciation," which was the view of al Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (170/786).[39]

This has been objected to because no word in the Qur'an can be read in seven ways, except for a few words, such as the word "*uff.*" Even if it is argued that each word may be read in one way or more up to seven, there are many words that can be read in more than seven ways.[40]

Most of the scholars; for example, al Ṭabarī (310/922), oppose this view, and even al Zarkashī (794/1391) considered it the weakest one.[41]

However, the seven *aḥruf*, if the meaning of the word is to be taken in this way, must not be regarded as being in any way connected with the

34. *Burhān,* 1:212.
35. *Itqān,* 1:173-76, *Burhān,* 1:212; Ibn Ḥibbān says: "These sayings resemble one another and are possible, and other interpretations are possible." See *Itqān,* 1:176.
36. *Itqān,* 1:131-41.
37. *Burhān,* 1:213; *Itqān,* 1:131.
38. *Manāhil,* 1:165.
39. *Burhān,* 1:213.
40. *Ibid.,* 1:213; *Itqān,* 1:132.
41. *Burhān,* 1:213.

seven readings that were collected for the first time by Ibn Mujāhid (324/935)[42] and that did not exist in the Prophet's lifetime or even in the first century.

Indeed, scholars of Qur'anic studies used to collect readings regardless of number, and many more readings than the seven of Ibn Mujāhid existed. The first scholar known to have collected readings in written form is Abū 'Ubayd al Qāsim Ibn Sallām (224/838), who is said to have given twenty-five readings.[43]

Later al Ṭabarī (310/922) wrote a book called *al Jāmi' fī al Qirā'āt,* which contained more than twenty readings.[44] This work no longer esists, although much of the material is incorporated into his *Tafsīr*. Many scholars did not agree with Ibn Mujāhid's attempt to limit the number of readings to seven for the precise reason that the following generation might think that these seven readings were the same as the seven *aḥruf* referred to in the hadith.[45] Indeed, a famous scholar in the field of Qur'anic readings, Abū Shāmah (665/1267), is quoted as having said, "No one thinks that these seven readings are what is meant in the hadith except the ignorant."

3. The seven *aḥruf* indicate seven meanings.

Those who subscribe to this opinion differ in their interpretation. Some say, for example, that it refers to command and prohibition. Some say, for example, that it refers to command and prohibition, lawful and unlawful, *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*[46] (that whose meaning is accepted and that which is disputable) and parables (*amthāl*).[47]

A hadith related by Ḥākim (405/1014) and al Bayhaqī (458/1065) favors this view: "The Qur'an has been revealed from seven doors according to seven *aḥruf*: restraining, commending, lawful, unlawful, *muḥkam, mutashābih,* and *amthāl*."[48] However, this hadith, which is not reported elsewhere, is said by Ibn 'Abd al Barr (563/1070) not to be authentic but weak.[49] Furthermore, al Bayhaqī himself, who narrated this hadith, stated that what is meant here by the seven *aḥruf* is the kinds of meaning in which the Qur'an has been revealed, but that the other *aḥādīth* refer to dialects.[50]

42. *Nashr,* 1:34.
43. *Ibid.,* 33-34.
44. *Ibid.,* 34; more detail on this matter is available in Chapter 6.
45. *Nashr,* 1:36.
46. *Itqān,* 1:138.
47. *Itqān,* 1:136-38.
48. *Ibid.,* 136.
49. *Burhān,* 1:216.
50. *Itqān,* 1:137. This is also the view of Abū Shāmah, Abū 'Alī al Ahwāzī, and Abū al 'Alā' al Hamadānī. See *ibid.,* 171-72.

Ibn al Jazarī (833/1429) raised a good reason for refuting this view, which is that the Companions did not dispute with each other about the interpretation of the verses but only about the ways of the recitation, as happened between 'Umar and Hishām and others.[51]

Finally, it is impossible to recite the Qur'an as if all of it is *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* or *amthāl*.[52] It is allowable to recite a verse in several ways, but not for a verse to be read in various ways that lead to contradiction, in meaning as would be the case with *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*.[53]

4. The seven *aḥruf* are ways of recitation using synonyms, for example, *ta'āl, aqbil, 'ajjil, asri'*.

Many scholars adopted this opinion[54] and quoted their evidence from the *aḥādīth* referring to the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*. Abū Bakrah states that: "Jibril came to the Prophet and said, 'O Muhammad, recite the Qur'an in one *ḥarf*,' and Mīkā'īl said: 'Ask for more,' till he reached seven *aḥruf*, each effective and sufficient, provided you do not seal a verse of punishment with mercy or a verse of mercy with punishment, like your saying, *'Ta'āl, aqbil, halumma, idhhab, asri', 'ajjil.'*"[55]

This interpretation is open to debate. First, this hadith is meant to show that the *aḥruf* in which the Qur'an has been revealed are synonymous in one meaning and, second, to witness that there is no contradiction in these *aḥruf* (i.e., they do not seal a verse of punishment with mercy).[56]

Further, individuals are not at liberty to recite the Qur'an in their own way or to replace one word or letter with another, whether it changes the meaning or not.[57] One should have heard the appropriate recitation from the Prophet himself directly or from him through his Companions and Successors.[58] In this respect, we may refer to the above-mentioned argument between 'Umar and Hishām, where each one said, "Allah's Apostle has taught it me."[59]

51. *Nashr*, 1:25.
52. *Itqān*, 1:137.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Itqān*, 1:134-35. Al Suyūṭī, quoting from Ibn 'Abd al Barr, attributes this to most of the scholars and specifically mentions the names of Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah, al Ṭabarī, Ibn Wahb, and al Ṭaḥāwī.
55. Related by Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī with a sound chain. Other versions give the same meaning. See *Qurṭubī*, 1:42; *Itqān*, 1:134.
56. *Qurṭubī*, 1:42; *Itqān*, 1:134, quoting Ibn 'Abd al Barr.
57. *Qurṭubī*, 1:43, quoting al Bāqillānī.
58. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:22.
59. *Bukhārī*, 6:483.

Moreover, those who adopted this opinion agreed that this permission was given in the beginning when most Arabs were illiterate and that subsequently the other six *aḥruf* were abrogated, so that there is only one *ḥarf* available now.[60] We can contest this interpretation because it is still permissible to recite the Qur'an in several ways, so that one can find an example of synonyms in *Sūrat al Ḥujurāt*, where *fatabayyanū* is also read *fatathabbatū*.[61]

Thus we cannot claim that all variants of this type have been abrogated or that the term *ḥarf* implies such a temporary concession with the aim of making recitation easier for the first generation.[62]

5. The seven *aḥruf* are seven dialects of the Arabs.

The Arab dialects, of course, exceeded seven, but the supporters of this view maintain that what is meant is the seven most eloquent dialects.[63] There is no agreement on identifying these seven dialects and the various versions differ greatly, although all agree on including the Qurayshī dialect.[64]

Ibn Qutaybah (275/888) attempted to prove that the Qur'an was revealed only in the Qurayshī dialect, quoting the Qur'anic text:

> We sent not an Apostle except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them. Now God leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. (14:4)

In his opinion, these dialects should represent various branches of Quraysh.[65] Al Qastallānī (923/1517) maintains that Quraysh were neighbors of the Ka'bah, and that they were preeminent among the Arab tribes. Their practice was to choose the best of style and words from the dialects of all the tribes that came to Makkah.[66] This view, however, appears to be an attempt to conflate two different ideas; i.e., that the *aḥruf* were dialects and that they were all variants of Qurayshī Arabic. In this respect, a state-

60. *Qurṭubī*, 1:43; *Itqān*, 1:134-35.
61. 49:6. The latter being the reading of Ḥamzah and al Kisā'ī, while the former is read by the rest of the *Qurrā'*. See al Qaysī, *Kitāb al Tabṣirah*, 480, 681; *Nashr*, 2:351, 376, adding Khalaf to Ḥamzah and al Kisā'ī.
62. *Manāhil*, 1:68-69.
63. *Burhān*, 1:217-18; *Itqān*, 1:169. This view is related by Abū 'Ubayd al Qāsim Ibn Sallām, Tha'lab, Sijistanī, al Qāḍi Abū Bakr, al Azharī, al Bāqillānī, and Ibn 'Aṭiyyah. See also Ibn Abī Zakariyyā, *Al Ṣāḥibi*, 41-42.
64. *Itqān*, 1:135-36; *Nashr*, 1:24; *Burhān*, 1:218-19; Qurṭubī, 1:44-45.
65. *Itqān*, 1:135, where Abū 'Alī al Ahwāzī is also quoted.
66. *Laṭā'if*, 1:33.

ment is attributed to 'Uthmān: "The Qur'an has been revealed in the language of Quraysh."[67] The most that this statement can mean is that the Qur'an is mainly in the Qurayshī dialect, since features from other dialects are found; for example, the retention of *hamza*, which generally disappears in the language of Ḥijāz.[68] However, many accounts indicate that the Qur'an was not revealed solely in the style of Quraysh. Although sometimes it is in the style of Quraysh, it also is in the style of other Arab tribes, according to the most fluent and concise forms of expression. For instance, Ibn 'Abbās did not understand the meaning of the word *faṭar* until he heard two bedouins talking about digging a well who were using this verb.[69] It might be most reasonable to assume that the Qur'an was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh and their neighbors at the beginning of the revelation. Then permission came later for all Arabs to recite the Qur'an in their own dialects, which they were used to, bearing in mind that these dialects were extremely varied. Thus they were not ordered or even asked to abandon their own dialects in favor of that of Quraysh, because it was difficult to do so and because people tried to cling strongly to their dialects. Above all, the permission facilitated the recitation and understanding of the Qur'an.[70]

However, no individual was given permission to replace any given word (of the Qur'an) by a synonym in his own dialect; everyone had to be taught the word directly from the Prophet.[71] On the other hand, no objections exist against this idea of the Qur'an's revelation in seven dialects for 'Umar and Hishām, although belonging to Quraysh, differed in their recitation. It does not seem reasonable to accept disagreement between two men who spoke in one dialect unless that difference referred to something else.[72]

67. *Qurṭubī*, 1:44. There is another version attributed to 'Umar in which he wrote to 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd: "The Qur'an has been revealed in the language of Quraysh, so do not recite to the people in the dialect of Hudhayl." See also al Qasṭallānī, *Laṭā'if*, 1:33. In some versions of these sayings, the name of Muḍar appears instead of Quraysh, but Ibn 'Abd al Barr says: "The authentic version is the first in which Quraysh was mentioned, because it is sound and came through the people of *Madīnah (Burhān*, 1:219-20). Also, some features of the speech of Muḍar are anomalous and are not allowed in the recitation of the Qur'an. As examples, the *Kashkashah* of Qays changes the feminine singular second person—*ki*—into *shi* in the verse "*Rabbuki Taḥtaki*" to read "Rabbushi Taḥtashi" (19:24) and the *tamtamah* of Tamīm, e.g., changing *sīn* to *tā'* so that "al Nās" reads "al Nāt" *(Qurṭubī*, 1:45; *Burhān*, 1:219-20).
68. *Qurṭubī*, 1:44, quoting Ibn 'Abd al Barr and al Qāḍī Ibn al Ṭayyib, who state: "Allāh Almighty says: 'We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic' (43:3, A. Y. Ali's Translation, p. 1342) and the Almighty did not say '*Qur'ānan Qurashiyyan*.'" No one claims that only Quraysh is meant here because the name of Arab covers all tribes.
69. *Qurṭubī*, 1:45.
70. *Nashr*, 1:22; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:22. In this respect, the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1st ed.), 2:1067, says: "The language in which Muḥammad delivered his revelation was according to the most natural assumption, the *Ḥidjāz* dialect of the people of Mecca."
71. *Itqān*, 1:136.
72. *Nashr*, 1:24; *Itqān*, 1:136. Al 'Izz Ibn 'Abd al Salām objected to the interpretation of the seven *aḥruf* as seven dialects (*Khams Rasā'il Nādirah*, 64). See Ḥammūdah, *al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 25.

Later, in his *I'jāz al Qur'ān,* al Rāfi'ī adopted this view of interpreting the seven *aḥruf* as seven dialects of the Arabs, but the number seven in his opinion is a symbolic term meaning a considerable number. He says: "These seven *aḥruf* mean the dialects of the Arabs to make it easy for each tribe to recite the Qur'an in its own way as it was used to in its dialect." He claimed that—to Arabs—the word *ḥarf* merely means "dialect." But they began, after Islam, to use the word *ḥarf* for methods of recitation, as, for instance, in the expression, "*Hādhā fī ḥarf Ibn Mas'ūd*" meaning his reading.[73]

6. The seven *aḥruf* indicate seven varieties and differences in the readings.

The first scholar to suggest this is Ibn Qutaybah, who was followed by the subsequent generation with little or no modification. Ibn Qutaybah studied the differences in readings and found they were the following seven:

1. A difference in the i'rāb and vocalization of the word that does not alter its consonantal outline in the orthography and does not alter its meaning (e.g., *hunna aṭharu/hunna aṭhara*).[74]
2. A difference in the *i'rāb* and the vocalization of the word that alters the meaning of the word but does not alter its consonantal outline (e.g., *rabbanā bā'id/rabbunā bā'ada*).[75]
3. A difference in the aḥruf of the word (but not in its *i'rāb*) that alters its meaning and does not change its consonantal outline (e.g., *nunshizuhā/nanshuruhā*).[76]
4. A difference in the word that changes its consonantal outline in the orthography and does not change its meaning (e.g., *kānat illā ṣayḥatan/zaqyatan*).[77]
5. A difference in the word that changes its consonantal outline and its meaning (e.g., *wa ṭalḥin manḍūd/wa ṭal'in naḍīd*).[78]
6. A difference in word order (e.g., *wa jā'at sakratu al mawti bi al ḥaqqi/sakratu al ḥaqqi bi al mawti*).[79]

73. *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 70-71. For more details, see Chapter 5.
74. 11:78.
75. 35:19.
76. 2:259.
77. 36:29.
78. 56:29 and 50:10. Ibn al Jazarī approved this analysis of Ibn Qutaybah except that he criticized it with respect to this example since it has no relevance to the difference in reading. Ibn al Jazarī says: "If he had used as an example in place of this *bi ḍanīn/bi ẓanīn* (81:24), the example would be valid." See *Nashr*, 1:28.
79. 50:19.

7. A difference in letters or augment (e.g., *wa mā 'amilathu/wa mā 'amilat*).[80]

Ibn al Jazarī's work agrees with Ibn Qutaybah in how he explains the *aḥruf*, except that he more clearly identifies and gives examples.

Abū al Faḍl al Rāzī (630/1232) follows the same approach to this question as does Ibn Qutaybah, but he puts the differences in a different order. For instance, his first and second types are included in the fifth type of Ibn Qutaybah and Ibn al Jazarī while the third covers the first and second of the other two. The sixth type of al Rāzī agrees with the fifth of the others, and the seventh might be included in the first of Ibn Qutaybah and Ibn al Jazarī. The third type of al Rāzī agrees with the fifth of the others, and his seventh might be included in the first of Ibn Qutaybah and Ibn al Jazarī. However, this last suggestion of al Rāzī should not be dismissed, since al Rāzī refers here to difference in dialect concerned with absence or presence of *imālah, tafkhīm, hamzah*, etc. Some scholars consider all differences to be a question of differences in pronunciation of this type.[81]

These are the differences between the scholars, who agree in their general approach. For instance, Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib mentions that a group of scholars adopted a view similar to that of Ibn Qutaybah, but he only explains their interpretation.[82]

The scholars who take this view are Ibn Qutaybah,[83] Ibn al Jazarī,[84] al Rāzī,[85] Makkī Ibn Ṭālib al Qaysī (437/1045),[86] the author of *Kitāb al Mabānī fī Naẓm al Ma'ānī*,[87] and Ibn al Bāqillānī (403/1012).[88]

Al Khū'ī's *Al Bayān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*[89] rejects all the *aḥādīth* of the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* simply on the grounds that these *aḥadīth* were not narrated through the *isnād* (pl. *asānīd*) of *Ahl al Bayt* in line with his Shi'ite methodology. He states that after the Prophet, reference in religious affairs should be made only to the Qur'an and *Ahl al Bayt*, whom Allah Almighty has purified. Hence, no versions are valid if they

80. 36:35.
81. *Itqān*, 1:133; al Rāfi'ī, in his book *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 70, adopts this view. The work of the author of *Kitāb al Mabānī fī Naẓm al Ma'ānī* adopts the same view. See *Muqad-dimatān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, ed., A. Jeffery, 221-28.
82. *Ibānah*, 36.
83. *Ta'wīl Mushkil al Qur'ān*, 28-30.
84. *Nashr*, 1:26-27.
85. *Ibid.*, 25; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:29. Ibn Ḥajar says here, "Al Rāzī quoted Ibn Qutaybah and refined it."
86. *Ibānah*, 37-42.
87. *Muqaddimatān*, 221-28.
88. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 120-22; *Qurṭubī*, 1:109-13.
89. Al Khū'ī, *al Bayān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*, 177-90.

differ from what is right in their view. Thus, there is no need to speak about the *asānīd* of these versions, this being the first reason to reject these versions and to consider them unauthentic.[90]

Furthermore, al Khūī' claims that these versions contain contradictions. For instance, permission to recite the Qur'an, according to one hadith, was given all at once. In one version Ubayy entered the mosque and saw a man reciting in a way different from his, but another version states that Ubayy was in the mosque and two men entered the mosque and recited in different ways from each other.[91]

Finally, al Khūī says that the reply was not related to the question in the version relating to Ibn Mas'ūd, who is reported to have differed with another person as to whether a certain surah should be reckoned as having thirty-five or thirty-six verses. 'Alī was beside the Prophet and answered, "The Messenger of Allah commands you to recite as you have been taught."[92]

All in all, in his opinion, there is no reasonable meaning for the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* and it is not understandable.[93]

This view has no firm basis. First, it is not agreed outside Shī'ite circles that *Ahl al Bayt* are the only references for the Islamic *Sharī'ah* and that the narrations of *Ahl al Sunnah*—including Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān—are invented. Al Khū'ī's approach would rule out *a priori* all discussions of the *aḥruf*, and from an objective academic point of view there is no justification for denying the validity of the hadith of *Ahl al Sunnah* in their entirety. It is stated clearly in the Qur'an:

> O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (the one who is) the most righteous of you . . . (49:13)

In any case, the differences between the versions in letters or words do not affect the truth of the hadith, nor can contradictions refute an authentic hadith.

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90. *Ibid.*, 177. He quoted from *Uṣūl al Kāfī*, 4:438-39, Abū Ja'far's statement: "The Qur'an has been revealed from One, but the difference comes from the narrators." It is also stated (439) that Abū 'Abd Allāh was asked about sayings that the Qur'an was revealed in seven *aḥruf* and he replied: "They lied and were enemies of Allāh and it was revealed in one *ḥarf* from the One."

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*, 178.

93. *Ibid.*

Al Khū'ī contradicts himself when he says: "Hence we find that the narrators differ in some words of al Mutanabbī's poems but this difference does not invalidate the existence of the *qaṣīdah* or its successive transmission (*tawātur*)." In the same way, the differences between the narrators in the details of the Prophet's Hijrah do not contradict the Hijrah itself or its *tawātur*.[94] If this is so, it is difficult to see why this principle should not also be applied to the question of the *aḥruf*. As for the objection that there is no relation between the question and the answer (in the hadith of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd), this can be answered quite simply by pointing out that the Companions were learning the recitation and counting the verses, because the Prophet would pause at the end of each verse (*āyah*).[95] This was part of the process of teaching. The Companions studied not more than ten verses at a time to recite and practice.[96]

Naturally, having rejected the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*, al Khū'ī does not accept the interpretation of the hadith but uses opposing arguments in an attempt to discredit them all. Despite this, he, surprisingly, mentions that he views al Rāfi'ī's opinion as closest to the truth, but rejects it because al Rāfi'ī interpreted "seven" as a symbolic term.[97] He also reduces Ibn Qutaybah's views to six. In addition, he says there is a seventh way of reading the Qur'an upon which all scholars agree, that Ibn Qutaybah does not take this into account, and that his seven interpretations of difference are in fact eight.[98] Thus, in addition to rejecting Ibn Qutaybah's premises, al Khū'ī wishes to show that his arguments are in any case fallacious.

Moreover, contrary to al Khū'ī's claim, the *aḥadīth* have a perfectly feasible value, which is that of facilitating recitation and making it easier for the Muslims to understand.[99] The scholars' differences in interpreting these *aḥadīth* do not affect the authenticity of the *aḥadīth*.[100]

However, the Shī'ite scholar Abū 'Abd Allāh al Zinjānī, in his book *Tārīkh al Qur'ān,* quoted the hadith narrated by 'Umar Ibn al Khaṭṭāb and many other *aḥādīth*.[101] He chooses the view of al Ṭabarī as the best interpretation, this referring to the seven ways of recitation using synonyms.[102] Later he mentions that it might be possible to interpret this hadith as refer-

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94. *Bayān*, 158.
95. This is confirmed by a sound hadith related by Abū Dāwūd and al Ḥākim. See al Albānī, *Ṣifat Ṣalāt al Nabiyy*, 70-71.
96. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Fatāwā*, 13:402; *Tartib al Musnad*, 18:9.
97. *Bayān*, 191-93.
98. *Ibid.*, 188.
99. See pp. 4-5 of this study.
100. For more information about the authenticity of these *aḥādīth*, see pp. 6-7 of this study.

ring to the differences in the recitation of the Qur'an (e.g., *imālah, ishmām,* and *idghām*) as they have been narrated by the seven readers.[103] Al Zinjānī attributed this view to al Shahrastānī in his *Tafsīr*.[104]

In conclusion, many sources and references support and witness to the revelation of the Qur'an in the seven *aḥrūf*, which can be put in the following order:

1. The fact that many authentic and sound *aḥādīth* indicate that the Qur'an has been revealed in seven different *aḥrūf*.[105]
2. The discussions and disputes among the Companions about differences in recitation during the lifetime of the Prophet, who himself taught them to recite in many ways different from each other.[106]
3. The disputes among the successors (*Tābi'ūn*) during the time of the "rightly guided" caliphs, particularly in the time of 'Uthmān.[107]
4. The many examples of differences in recitation that exist in the books of *sunan,* like those of al Bukhārī, Muslim, al Tirmidhī, and others.[108] Moreover, the books of *tafsīr* like that of al Ṭabarī[109] and books on the history of *qirā'āt* and *maṣāhif,* like that of Ibn Abī Dāwūd,[110] include many different *riwāyāt* of the readings of the Qur'an.[111]
5. The *Qurrā'*, the readers of the Qur'an in different ways of recitation, continuously, through generations, memorized and taught their students and followers the *qirā'āt*, readings of the Qur'an in different ways according to rules of *riwāyāt* and *isnād.*

The following chapters will study these *qirā'āt* and the conditions governing them, and will attempt to discover whether any are not based on

101. For the text of this *aḥādīth* and some others, see al Zinjānī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 33-37, and pp. 3-5 of this study.
102. Al Zinjānī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 37.
103. *Ibid.*, also see pp. 13-14 of this study.
104. This *tafsīr* is called *Mafātīḥ al Asrār wa Maṣābīḥ al Abrār*, which al Zinjānī says is a respected *tafsīr*. The author of this *tafsīr* is Abū al Fatḥ Muḥammad Ibn al Qāsim Ibn Aḥmad al Shahrastānī, a theologian and jurist who was born in 477 A.H. and died in 548 A.H. A manuscript of this work exists in the Majlis Library, Tehran. See *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 36.
105. See pp. 3-9 of this book.
106. *Ibid.*, 3-4, 5-6.
107. See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, ed. A. Jeffery, passim.
108. Each book has a chapter or more on the *qirā'āt* under *Tafsīr* and *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*.
109. Al Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al Bayān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*.
110. See also A. Jeffery, *Material for the History of the Text of the Qur'an*, including *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, passim.
111. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 5.

the *muṣḥaf* of 'Uthman, and whether in this case they may be derived from the *aḥrūf*.

In conclusion, we may say that the scholars agreed unanimously that the Qur'an has been revealed in seven *aḥrūf* in order to facilitate the reading of the Qur'an. This apparently came after the Hijrah, when various tribes that spoke many different dialects embraced Islam and found it difficult to abandon their own dialects immediately.

Those who deny the authenticity of the *aḥādīth* dealing with this subject do not seem to have any objective basis for their arguments.

Finally, although scholars disagree as to the meaning of the *aḥrūf*, the most natural interpretation is that they refer to linguistic variations in the manner of reciting the Qur'an. However, it is difficult to commit to any of the specific definitions of these linguistic variations advanced by various scholars.

CHAPTER 2

COMPILATION OF THE QUR'AN

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had scribes whom he ordered to write down the revelation of the Qur'an on materials[1] available at that time.

It is stated that whenever he received verses or surahs, he commanded one of his scribes immediately to record and to arrange them in their places in the surahs of the Qur'an.[2]

Many accounts support this view, that every revealed verse was written down at the time of its revelation and was put in a preordained order and kept in a safe place.[3]

Many scribes took down the revelation. Some were assigned permanently to record the revelation, being given the title of *Kātib al Waḥy*, while others normally were engaged on other secretarial duties and were brought in to take down the revelation only occasionally.[4]

The scribes of the revelation whom the Prophet asked to write down the verses—and the portions of the Qur'an that he received—were many; even more scribes performed secretarial duties.[5]

Certain scholars tried to count the number of scribes by using the sources available to them. Ibn Kathīr counts twenty-two,[6] and recently we find the number increased to thirty-three[7] or about sixty.[8] The most famous

1. These are said to have included palm stalks (*'usub*), thin white stones (*likhāf*), pieces of wood (*alwāḥ*), and shoulder bones (*aktāf*). See *Bukhārī*, 6:478 and 481. For more detail, see p. 29 below.
2. Al Baghawī, *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 4:522.
3. *Al Bukhārī*, 6:480.
4. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:22; *Kitāb al Wuzarā' wa al Kuttāb*, 12-14; *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 5:339-55; *Al 'Iqd al Farīd*, 4:245-47.
5. *Al Musnad*, 6:250; *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, 3; al Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al Wuzarā' wa al Kuttāb*, 12-14; *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 5:339-55; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:22; *Al 'Iqd al Farīd*, 4:245-54.
6. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 5:339-55.
7. *Ma'a al Maṣāḥif*, 15-18.
8. *Kuttāb al Nabiyy*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: 1981).

scribes are 'Uthmān, 'Ali, Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, and Zayd Ibn Thābit,[9] who is known as *Kātib al Nabiyy* or *Kātib al Waḥy*.[10]

To ensure that the Qur'an would not be confused with his own utterances, the Prophet is reported to have ordered his Companions to write nothing except the Qur'an. Furthermore, he commanded those who may have written down anything other than the Qur'an to efface it.[11]

As a result, the entire revelation is said to have been gradually secured, kept in a written form, and stored in the Prophet's house.[12]

The Prophet gave a number of the Companions permission to have their own manuscripts (in the sense of collections of fragments) in addition to memorizing the Qur'an.[13] The most famous among them, who are said to have taught many others, are the following: 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, Abū al Dardā', Zayd Ibn Thābit, 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Mūsā al Ash'arī[14] Sālim (the *mawlā* of Abū Ḥudhayfah), and Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal.[15]

Thus, the Qur'an was memorized by many Companions and was all written down in the form that has come to us (i.e., the same verses and surahs in the very same order).[16]

Though the Qur'an was fully recorded, using all possible writing materials, it was not written in the form of a *muṣḥaf* (referring to the Qur'an in book form). This was done later after the Prophet had passed away.

Even before the recorded Qur'anic text was in book form, it was known as *Al Kitāb* (The Book). For instance, the Qur'an states in 2:2: "This is the book without doubt; in it is guidance sure to those who fear God."

The Prophet is also reported as having said before his death: "I have left amongst you Muslims that which, if you stick to it, you will not be misguided—the book of Allah."[17]

Al Baghawī explains that these records were not compiled in an official *muṣḥaf* during the time of the Prophet because some verses were abrogated during the period of the revelation of the Qur'an. When there was no more abrogation and the revelation was sealed, the time had come for the formal compilation to be carried out.[18]

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9. *Kitāb al Wuzarā' wa al Kuttāb*, 12; *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 7:145; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:22.
10. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:22.
11. Al Nasā'ī, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 72; Al Khaṭīb al Baghdādi, *Taqyīd al 'Ilm*, 29-32.
12. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:13; *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 5:521-22.
13. *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, 50-88; *Al Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al Saḥābah*, 2:489; *Materials*, 20-238.
14. *Manāhil*, 1:245.
15. *Bukhārī*, 6:487, adds these two names to the list given in *Manāhil*.
16. See, for example, al Baghawī, *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 4:518.
17. Al Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al Nawawī*, 7:184.
18. *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 5:519.

Burton argues against this view on the basis of his rejection of the two modes of *mansūkh al tilāwah.*[19] However, a stronger argument in its favor would be the fact that it would be pointless to compile the Qur'an into a bound *muṣḥaf* until the process of revelation was completed.

Compilation of the Qur'an during the Reigns of Abū Bakr and 'Uthmān

The Companions and their Followers relied on memorizing the Qur'an—teaching the young and newly converted Muslims the Qur'an through memorization. In addition, they had their personal manuscripts.

The Qur'an remained uncompiled in official book form until the year 12 A.H., when seventy of the *Ḥuffāẓ* were killed in Yamāmah fighting against the self-proclaimed prophet Musaylimah.[20] Forty *Ḥuffāẓ,* and possibly seventy, had been killed earlier in the battle of Bi'r Ma'ūnah.[21]

'Umar came to Abū Bakr with the suggestion that the Qur'an should be compiled in a single book as a safeguard against the loss of some parts of the records or the death of the *Ḥuffāẓ.*

Abū Bakr considered the matter carefully and agreed with 'Umar after some hesitation. He then entrusted Zayd Ibn Thābit with the compilation since he had the following qualifications:

1. He was the well-known scribe of the revelation (*Kātib al Waḥy al Mashhūr*).
2. He was a *Ḥāfiẓ* of the Qur'an.
3. He had checked through the text with the Prophet after the Prophet had recited it in the presence of Jibrīl for the last time.
4. He was young, knowledgeable, wise, and reliable.
5. He was skilled at writing the Qur'an.[22]

Zayd was afraid of carrying out this task because he felt that he could not do something that the Prophet had not asked him to do. Abu Bakr finally persuaded him, and he started the work by comparing the Prophet's record with the memorized and written versions of those of the *Ḥuffāẓ* who were available in Madīnah. He then wrote out the entire text

19. See *The Collection of the Qur'ān,* passim. For a further discussion of this question, see also p. 49.
20. *Qurṭubī*, 1:50. See pp. 38-39 for a further discussion of the number killed.
21. *Ṭārikh al Ṭabarī,* 2:545-49; al Wāqidī, *Maghāzī,* 1:346-350; *Al Kāmil,* 2:171-72; *Bukharī,* 5:287-88.
22. *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 9:13.

in book form and presented the *muṣḥaf* to Abū Bakr, who received it and kept it in his custody.[23]

The *muṣḥaf* remained with Abū Bakr until he died, then with 'Umar until the end of his life, and then with Ḥafṣah, the daughter of 'Umar and the wife of the Prophet, who was the executor for her father, and was herself a *Ḥāfiẓah.* This was because 'Umar had died before the installation of the third *khalīfah.*[24] At this time disputes arose about the reading of the Qur'an among the *Qurrā'* (i.e., readers) because some of the Companions and the Followers were teaching students in the cities they were sent to in versions that differed in various ways, and also because the Companions were reciting the Qur'an in the seven *aḥruf* they were permitted to use.

By the time of 'Uthmān, disputes among the readers became so heated that they were accusing each other of unbelief (*kufr*). Many complaints were brought before 'Uthmān, urging him to take action to avert fighting and division among the Muslims. Such disputes occurred in many places: Madīnah,[25] Kūfah, Baṣrah, Syria, and the military camps (*ajnād*). Hudhayfah Ibn al Yamān was in the battle zones of Armenia and Azerbaijan and witnessed these disputes among Muslims. He became very annoyed and hastened to Madīnah to suggest to 'Uthmān a unified reading of the Qur'an. He addressed him saying, "O Chief of the Believers! Save this Ummah before they differ about the Book as the Jews and the Christians did before."[26]

Consequently, 'Uthman called the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* for consultation. All of them agreed and encouraged him to unify the reading of the Qur'an.[27]

'Uthmān sent a message to Ḥafṣah saying: "Send us the manuscript of the Qur'an, so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscript to you." Ḥafṣah sent the manuscript to 'Uthmān. 'Uthmān then ordered Zayd Ibn Thābit, 'Abd Allāh Ibn al Zubayr, Sa'īd Ibn al 'Āṣ, and 'Abd al Raḥmān Ibn Ḥārith Ibn Hishām to write the manuscripts in perfect copies. 'Uthmān said to the Qurayshī men, "If you disagree with Zayd Ibn Thābit on any point in the Qur'an, write it in the dialect (*lisān*) of Quraysh as the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue."[28] They did so and when they had written many copies, 'Uthmān returned the original manuscript to Ḥafṣah.[29]

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23. *Bukharī*, 6:478.
24. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:10-16.
25. Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:21; *Itqān*, 1:102; *Al Maṣāḥif*, 21; *Al Muqni'*, 8.
26. Bukharī, 6:479.
27. *Al Kāmil*, 3:111-12.
28. For further discussion, see Chapter 5.
29. *Bukhārī*, 6:479.

To every Muslim region, 'Uthmān sent one copy and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether whole or fragmentary manuscripts, be burnt.[30]

The Companions, the learned men, and the leading figures agreed with 'Uthmān and approved the decision he had made, including 'Alī. 'Alī is reported to have confronted those who rebelled against 'Uthmān and said to them that 'Uthmān burnt only the *maṣāḥif* that varied from the final revelation and preserved that which was agreed upon,[31] that he did nothing without the consultation and consent of all Companions, and, furthermore, that if he were in 'Uthmān's position he would have done the same thing.[32]

In fact, Muslims in general admired 'Uthmān's action and agreed to it unanimously (with the exception of Ibn Mas'ūd) because 'Uthmān united them in one *muṣḥaf*, cleansed from any abrogated versions, and freed it from any *āḥād* reading or any interpretation that may have been added to the text.[33]

Methods Adopted in This Compilation

We can assume that the scribes thoroughly investigated the text of the Qur'an in order to ensure the authenticity of the written form compared with memorized versions, that they ensured that all the verses and surahs they wrote down were revised according to the final revelation, that they were convinced that the text was as it had been recited by the Prophet in the final revelation, and that there were no abrogated verses in the *muṣḥaf* (for example, *Sūrat al Jumu'ah* [62:9], where the word *fās'ū* is sometimes said to be read *fāmḍū*, but the authentic one is the first, the latter having been abrogated in the final revelation).[34]

Thus, the people agreed unanimously with 'Uthmān, since his new compilation was in accordance with the first compilation of Abū Bakr. It is stated in a sound hadith (*riwāyah ṣaḥīḥah*) that the reading of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Zayd Ibn Thābit, the *Muhājirūn*, and the *Anṣār* was the same, and was the common reading that was taught to them after the final revelation. The Prophet read the Qur'an with Jibrīl once in every Ramaḍān, but in the last Ramaḍān before he passed away he read it twice. Zayd Ibn Thābit bore witness to this final revelation and read it with the Prophet and wrote it down for him in this way.

30. *Ibid.*
31. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 7:171.
32. *Al Kāmil*, 3:112. For a discussion of the position of 'Alī in Shī'ite sources, see p. 56 of this book.
33. *Manāhil*, 1:260-61.
34. *Ibid*, 1:257-60.

Hence, this reading was named the reading of Zayb Ibn Thabit because he wrote it and read it to the Prophet and taught his students what he had been taught. For this reason also he was in charge of the project for the first and the second compilations.[35]

The scribes of the compilation of 'Uthmān were four, according to Bukhārī.[36]

Ibn Abī Dāwūd (316/928) narrates on the authority of Muhammad Ibn Sīrīn (110/729) that the scribes whom 'Uthmān instructed to compile the *Qur'ān* were twelve, being from the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār*, and that Ubayy Ibn Ka'b was one of them. Ibn Sīrīn adds, "Kuthayyir Ibn Aflaḥ told me—and he was one of the scribes—that when they differed in writing something they used to postpone writing it. I think that this postponing was to make sure that it corresponded to the final revealed version."[37]

It is said also that the scribes of this revelation were only two, Zayd Ibn Thābit and Sa'īd Ibn al 'Āṣ, for the reason that Zayd was the best in writing and Sa'īd was more eloquent in pronunciation.[38]

Those who say that the scribes were twelve include scribes who dictated and others who wrote, but do not mention all of their names. Al 'Asqalānī found that nine of them are mentioned in various places by Ibn Abī Dāwūd and lists them.[39] They are, in addition to the four mentioned in Bukhārī,[40] Mālik Ibn Abī 'Āmir (grandfather of Mālik Ibn Anas), Kuthayyir Ibn Aflaḥ, Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, Anas Ibn Mālik, and 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abbās. Ibn Abī Dāwūd reports the command of 'Umar Ibn al Khaṭṭāb: "No one should dictate in our *maṣāḥif* except those who belonged to Quraysh and Thaqīf."[41]

Al 'Asqalānī argues that in fact no one from Thaqīf was among the scribes, as they were either from Quraysh or the *Anṣār*.[42] He tries to evaluate these views and suggests that at the beginning of the compilation Zayd and Sa'īd were the sole scribes, but when help was needed to write out more copies to be sent to the provinces, the other scribes were added.[43]

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35. *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 5:525-26. It is narrated on the authority of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd that he also witnessed the final revelation.
36. 6:479. See also *al Kāmil*, 3:112.
37. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:19; *Al Maṣāḥif*, 25-26.
38. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:19.
39. *Ibid.*; *Al Maṣāḥif*, 25-26.
40. 6:479.
41. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 11.
42. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:19.
43. *Ibid.* For a modern attempt to establish the names of the other scribes, see *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 92; *Dirāsāt fī al Thaqāfah al Islāmiyyah*, 59.

Ibn Mas'ūd is said to have felt ignored or insulted when he was not asked to join the committee set up to compile the Qur'an. He is quoted as having said that he had been taught seventy surahs by the Prophet, while Zayd Ibn Thābit was a young boy playing with children.[44] As a result, Ibn Mas'ūd is said to have refused to give his *muṣḥaf* back to 'Uthmān to be burnt and to have told his students to do the same. Ibn Abī Dāwūd states, however, that Ibn Mas'ūd reconsidered and gave his *muṣḥaf* back to 'Uthmān.[45]

The reason 'Uthmān did not include Ibn Mas'ūd is discussed by al 'Asqalānī, who points out that Ibn Mas'ūd was not in Madīnah at the time when 'Uthmān urgently appointed the committee. He was in Kūfah. Furthermore, 'Uthmān did nothing more than reproduce the pages compiled by the command of Abū Bakr into one *muṣḥaf*. In the times of Abū Bakr and of 'Uthmān, Zayd Ibn Thābit had the privilege of being the scribe in charge of compilation.[46]

The Materials of Inscription of the Qur'an

The materials available at the time of the first compilation during the lifetime of the Prophet are said to have included the following: Palm stalks (*'usub*), thin white stones (*likhāf*), boards (*alwāḥ*), scapula bones (*aktāf*), saddles (*aqtāb*), leather (*adīm*), pieces of cloth (*riqā'*),[47] potsherds (*khazaf*), shells (*ṣadaf*),[48] ribs (*aḍlā'*),[49] and parchment (*raqq*)[50]

When the compilation took place during the reign of Abū Bakr, the materials differed from those of the first inscription.

Al 'Asqalānī states that Abū Bakr was the first one to compile the Qur'an on paper[51] and in one *muṣḥaf*. He supports his view by a version attributed to Ibn Shihāb al Zuhrī (124/741).[52] He refutes the view that Zayd

44. *Al Musnad*, 5:325, *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:19; *Qurṭubī*, 1:52-53; Ibn Sa'd, *al Ṭabaqāt*, 2:444.
45. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 18; *Qurṭubī*, 1:52-53; *Al Tamhīd wa al Bayān fī Maqtal al Shahīd 'Uthmān*. The author, Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥya Ibn Abī Bakr, adds "but the followers of Ibn Mas'ūd did not agree with him. Then Ibn Mas'ūd asked 'Uthmān for permission to return to Madīnah as he did not wish to stay in Kūfah. He was given permission and came to Madīnah some months before he passed away."
46. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:19.
47. *Bukhārī*, 6:478-81; *Miftāḥ al Sa'ādah*, 2:292; *Al Muḥarrar al Wajīz*, 1:64.
48. *Al Muharrar al Wajīz*, 1:64.
49. Ibn al Baqillānī, *al Tamhīd*, 222.
50. *Al Awā'il*, 1:214. The author interprets *raqq* as *waraq*, which meant "parchment" at the time. In this connection it is reported also that individuals would come with a *waraqah* to the Prophet, whou would ask one of the scribes to write on it for him. See al Bayhaqī, *Al Sunan al Kubrā*, 6:16.
51. Clearly this is an anachronism, since even papyrus was not in use during this period in Arabia. Presumably, what is intended is parchment.
52. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:16.

wrote for Abū Bakr on leather and palm leaf stalks and rewrote the Qur'an for 'Umar on paper.[53] He asserts that the Qur'an was written on leather and palm leaf stalks before the time of Abū Bakr and that it was rewritten on parchment during the reign of Abū Bakr.[54]

In a modern study it is argued that the oldest *muṣḥaf* in existence is that found in the Mosque of 'Amr Ibn al 'Āṣ in Egypt. It is written on parchment, probably the best medium for an important document such as the Qur'an, which is intended to have a long life.[55] Although papyrus was of course available in Egypt, which is not far from Arabia, none of the old *maṣāḥif* which exist today use it.[56] Paper was not known in the Islamic world before (134/751).[57]

The Sending of the *Maṣāḥif* to the Provinces

The number of *maṣāḥif* sent to the cities is not specified. The old sources cite no fixed number. However, al Bukhārī, on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik, states: "'Uthmān sent to every Muslim province a copy of what they had copied" (*ilā kull ufuq min āfāq al Muslimīn*).[58]

Ibn Abī Dāwūd states: "'Uthmān sent a *muṣḥaf* to every Muslim battlefield"[59] and "he distributed *maṣāḥif* to the people."[60]

Likewise, in many other primary or secondary sources, no reference is made to a particular number of *maṣāḥif*.

Later on, reference is made to four copies with or without mentioning names of cities. Those which mentioned the number of *maṣāḥif* differ in the names of the cities to which the *maṣāḥif* were sent.

Ibrāhīm al Nakha'ī (d. 96/714) is quoted as supporting the view that the number of *maṣāḥif* sent by 'Uthmān was four.[61]

Ḥamzah, one of the seven canonical readers, stated that his *muṣḥaf* was copied from the Kūfan *muṣḥaf*, which was one of the four *maṣāḥif* sent to the cities.[62]

Abū 'Amr al Dānī (444/1052) states that four copies existed, three of which were sent to Kūfah, Baṣrah, and Makkah, while the fourth copy was kept in Madīnah in the custody of 'Uthmān. Al Dānī adds that this is the

53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. Al Zafzāf, *Al Ta'rīf bi al Qur'ān wa al Ḥadīth*, 84-85.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Al Tha'ālibī, *Thimār al Qulūb*, 543; *Laṭā'if al Ma'ārif*, 160, 218.
58. *Bukhārī*, 6:479.
59. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 20.
60. *Ibid.*, 12.
61. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 35.
62. *Ibid.*, 34.

opinion of most scholars.[63] Al 'Asqalānī agrees with the famous saying that they number five.[64]

According to Ibn al Bāqillānī they are five, a copy being sent to Kūfah, Baṣrah, Yaman, and Baḥrayn, while 'Uthmān kept a copy for himself.[65] He is followed by al Qasṭallānī, who opts for the number mentioned by al 'Asqalānī.[66]

Ibn 'Āshir argues that five *maṣāḥif* were sent to Makkah, Damascus (Shām), Baṣrah, Kūfah, and Madīnah, while 'Uthmān kept a sixth copy for himself, which is known as *Mushaf al Imām.*[67]

Al Zurqānī considered the evidence for the existence of copies five and six. He suggested that the scholars who counted them as five did not count the personal copy of 'Uthmān, and he therefore supported the view that counted them as six.[68]

Abū Ḥātim al Sijistānī (d. 250/864) states: "'Uthmān sent seven *maṣāḥif*, keeping one in Madīnah and distributing the rest to Makkah, Damascus, Yemen, Baḥrayn, Baṣrah, and Kūfah."[69] He is seconded in this by Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1175)[70] and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372),[71] except that the latter puts Egypt in the place of Baḥrayn. In *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān* he gives the list quoted above, but in the later *Al Bidāyah* he mentions Egypt in place of Baḥrayn.

Al Rāfi'ī, in his book *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab,*[72] supports this view, choosing the names suggested by Ibn Kathīr in his *al Bidāyah.*

Ibn al Jazarī (d. 833/1429) opts for the number mentioned by Abū Ḥātim, but adds that an eighth copy was retained by 'Uthmān, which was known as *Muṣḥaf al Imām.*[73]

Finally, al Ya'qūbī (284/897) counts nine copies, adding Egypt and al Jazīrah to the list given by Abū Ḥātim.[74]

In conclusion, the most reliable evidence suggests that the number of *maṣāḥif* was six. The reason is that all of the scholarly works on *qirā'āt* refer repeatedly to the *maṣāḥif* of Madīnah, Makkah, Damascus (Shām),

63. *Al Muqni'*, 11; *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 74.
64. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:20.
65. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 359.
66. *Irshād al Sārī*, 7:535.
67. *Manāhil al 'Irfān*, 1:403.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Al Maṣaḥif*, 34; *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 73.
70. *Tahdhīb Tarīkh Dimashq*, 1:44.
71. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 3:216.
72. 2:20-21.
73. *Al Nashr*, 1:7.
74. *Tārīkh al Ya'qūbī*, 2:1471.

Kūfah, and Baṣrah and *Muṣḥāf al Imām*, and never mention any other *muṣḥaf*.[75]

This argument is supported by the fact that 'Uthmān is said to have entrusted five *Qurrā'* with the *maṣāḥif*. He appointed Zayd Ibn Thābit to teach the people of Madīnah, and sent 'Abd Allāh Ibn al Sā'ib to Makkah, al Mughīrah Ibn Shihāb to Shām, Abū 'Abd al Raḥmān al Sulamī to Kūfah, and 'Āmir Ibn 'Abd al Qays to Baṣrah.[76]

The students and followers of the *Qurrā'* taught the following generations in the same way that they had been taught.[77] Thus there seems to be no place for Egypt, Baḥrayn, Yemen, or al Jazīrah, since no evidence points to them; the assumption that there were seven or more *maṣāḥif* is even less likely.

The earliest reports, which do not mention a fixed number of cities, can be interpreted to attest to five, since these were mainly where textual disputes were taking place at that time.

The addition of a sixth *muṣḥaf* may be credible in that it takes into account 'Uthmān's personal copy. This is supported by the fact that when 'Uthmān was killed, he was reading his personal *muṣḥaf*.[78] There are early references to the *muṣḥaf* of 'Uthmān, which is known as *Mushaf al Imām*. Abū 'Ubayd al Qāsim Ibn Sallām quotes from this *muṣḥaf* and mentions that he has seen it.[79] Ibn al Jazarī also is reported to have seen this *muṣḥaf*.[80]

Moreover, the *muṣḥaf* of Madīnah is different from that of 'Uthmān. In this respect, al Shāṭibī states that Nāfi' quoted the *muṣḥaf* of Madīnah while Abū 'Ubayd quoted that of 'Uthmān.[81]

The Dating of the Compilation of the Qur'an in the Reign of 'Uthmān

In all *aḥādīth* that mention the compilation of the Qur'an in the time of 'Uthmān, no evidence suggests that the event took place other than after Ḥudhayfah had witnessed the dispute among the *Qurrā'* in the battle zone of Armenia.[82]

Al Ṭabarī is the first who suggested a fixed date for this event. He states that it was in 24/644.[83] Al 'Asqalānī agreed and tried to support the

75. *Al Muqni'*, 98-131; Abū 'Ubaydah, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 264-300.
76. *Manāhil*, 1:403-404; *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 90-91.
77. *Manāhil*, 1:403-04.
78. *Al Tamhīd wa al Bayān*, 138-39.
79. Abū 'Ubaydah, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 264-300; *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 89.
80. *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 89.
81. *Kitāb 'Aqīlat Atrāb al Qaṣā'id*, 12; *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 89.
82. Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:59-61; *Bukhārī*, 6:481; *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, 11-26.
83. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 4:246. He also mentions another version that suggests the year 26 A.H.

accuracy of the date through other reports. He states, "This event took place in the year twenty five of the Hijrah in the third or second year of 'Uthmān's installation as khalīfah."[84] He quotes Ibn Abī Dāwūd, on the authority of Muṣ'ab Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, as saying, "'Uthmān preached and said: 'O People, only fifteen years elapsed since the Prophet passed away and you differ in the recitation of the Qur'an.'"[85] Al 'Asqalānī argues that the installation of 'Uthmān took place after 'Umar's death at the end of Dhū' al Ḥijjah, in the twenty-third year of the Hijrah (i.e., twelve years and nine months after the death of the Prophet), and that if this is so then the compilation must have taken place two years and three months after his installation. He adds that in another version it is given as thirteen years instead of fifteen.[86] He compares the two views and concludes that the event must have taken place one year after the installation of 'Uthmān, which can be taken as the end of the twenty-fourth or the beginning of the twenty-fifth year of the Hijrah.[87] However, the authenticity of both versions quoted by al 'Asqalānī has been questioned.[88] Indeed, if they were sound, the scholars would have accepted his opinion unanimously, and no other suggestions would have been discussed.

Al 'Asqalānī also says, "It is claimed by some of our contemporaries that the event took place in the thirtieth year of the Hijrah," but he does not quote any reference or give any evidence.[89]

The contemporary whom he quotes as suggesting the thirtieth year of the Hijrah is Ibn al Jazarī, who fixed this year in his book *Al Nashr fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr* (1:7). In fact, Ibn al Athīr, who preceded Ibn al Jazarī, mentions the same date, although he does not give any reference to support his view.[90] Some other scholars affirm this opinion.[91] Yet other scholars mention both dates without opting for either of them.[92]

In some Western scholars' view, the event took place in 33/653 according to their dating of the conquest of Armenia. Hence, the Qur'an would have been compiled at that time.[93] One fact, however, contradicts

84. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:17.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.* In this he was followed by al Qaṣtallānī, *Irshād al Sārī*, 7:534; al Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 1:170.
88. *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 59.
89. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:17.
90. *Al Kāmil*, 3:111-12.
91. For example, Abū al Fidā', *Al Mukhtaṣar fī Tārīkh al Bashar*, 1;167; Muhammad Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Bakr, *Al Tamhīd wa al Bayān*, 50.
92. For example, *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt*, 1:58.
93. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, 64.

this view, which is that Ibn Mas'ūd, who is reported to have refused to return his *muṣḥaf* to 'Uthmān and to have told his students not to hand their *maṣāḥif* over to be burnt,[94] is said to have died at the end of 32/652[95] or in 33 A.H.[96] The following scholars agree that Ibn Mas'ūd died at Madīnah in 32 A.H.: al Ṭabarī,[97] al Balādhurī (279/892),[98] al 'Āmirī,[99] Ibn Qutaybah,[100] al Dhahabī,[101] and Ibn 'Abd al Barr.[102] If this date is correct, the compilation would have taken place earlier.

However, since this compilation has been connected with the conquest of Armenia in which Ḥudhayfah Ibn al Yamān was present, the narrations differed in dating the event. In fact, there were many campaigns of conquest in Armenia, and Ḥudhayfah himself participated in three of them.[103]

The first date mentioned, as narrated by Abū Mikhnaf, is 24 A.H.[104] Then al Ṭabarī states that Ḥudhayfah was directed to the conquest of *Al Bāb* (Darband) as a help to 'Abd al Raḥmān Ibn Rabī'ā in the year 30/650.[105] Al Ṭabarī, who mentions some small details here and in other places, does not mention anything about the *maṣāḥif*. However, Ibn al Athīr states that Hudhayfah, when he returned after this conquest, told 'Uthmān what he had witnessed in the battlefield among the *Qurrā'*. Consequently, 'Uthmān consulted the Companions, who agreed with him to compile the Qur'an.[106] Two years later (32/650), Ḥudhayfah was in that region, leading the people of Kūfah.[107] In conclusion, the first narration of Abū Mikhnaf does not seem to be authentic. Although al Balādhurī (279/892) on one occasion quotes it, in his opinion it is not the best one. The other versions he gives do not suggest any fixed date,[108] although they correspond with the events detailed in the conquest of the year 30/650, as mentioned in other sources.[109]

94. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 13-18.
95. *Ghāyat al Nihāyah*, 1:459.
96. *Al Iṣābah*, 2:369; *Tahdhīb*, 6:28. al 'Asqalānī attributes to Abū Nu'aym and others the year 32 A.H., and the year 33 A.H. to Yaḥyā Ibn Bukayr. See *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīh*, as above.
97. *Tarīkh al Ṭabarī*, 4:308.
98. *Ansāb al Ashrāf*, 1:526.
99. *Al Riyāḍ al Mustaṭāba*, 190-92.
100. *Al Ma'ārif*, 109.
101. *Tarīkh al Islām*, 3:104.
102. *Al Istī'āb*, 2:324.
103. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 4:307.
104. *Ibid.* Al Ṭabarī adds that others place the event in 26 A.H. Ibn al Athīr states that it was in 25 A.H.; *Al Kāmil*, 3:83.
105. *Tarīkh al Ṭabarī*, 4:281.
106. *Al Kāmil*, 3:111-12.
107. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 4:306-07; *Al Kāmil*, 3:131-33.
108. *Futūḥ al Buldān*, 277-88.
109. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 4:306-07; *Al Kāmil*, 3:131-33.

Leaving aside the issues raised by the death of Ibn Mas'ūd in the year 32 A.H., it is reasonable to assume the compilation took place in the year 30/650, which is suggested by Ibn al Athīr,[110] supported by Ibn al Jazarī,[111] and followed by some other scholars.[112]

The Validity of Abū Bakr's Compilation

Some scholars argue that 'Umar was the first to compile the Qur'an. In support of this they quote an account given by Ibn Sa'd (230/844).[113] It is reported also that 'Umar asked about a verse, and when he was informed that it had been preserved in the memory of a certain man who was killed on the day of Yamāmah, he ordered the Qur'an to be compiled in one *muṣḥaf*.[114] He asked every person who had learned anything from the Prophet to bring it, and he would accept only what two witnesses testified to.[115] Furthermore, it is argued that if Abū Bakr had participated in the compilation, it would have become an official *muṣḥaf* for the state, which it was not. (If it were, it would not have been transferred to Ḥafṣah, daughter of 'Umar, but would have passed into the custody of 'Uthmān).[116]

In addition, it is said that Abū Bakr did not live after the Battle of Yamāmah for more than fifteen months, which, it is argued, was not enough time for a great task like the compilation of the Qur'an. Moreover, there was not such a considerable number of great *Qurrā'* killed on this occasion that it might be feared that some parts of the Qur'an would be lost by their death.[117] Furthermore, as discussed above, the Qur'an was committed to writing during the lifetime of the Prophet.[118]

However, in answer to these arguments it could be said that 'Umar's role was to suggest to Abū Bakr the compiling of the Qur'an in one book and to assist him in this. According to the hadith discussed above, he persuaded both Abū Bakr and Zayd Ibn Thābit and supervised the work of compilation. The *muṣḥaf* then came into 'Umar's custody after he became *khalīfah* and remained with him until his death, when it was transferred

110. *Al Kāmil*, 3:111-12.
111. *Al Nashr*, 1:7.
112. See p. 34 above.
113. *Al Ṭabaqāt al Kubrā*, 3:2.
114. *Itqān*, 1:166.
115. *Ibid.*
116. Jeffery, *Concluding Essay*, 14; 'Abd al Qādir, *Naẓrah 'Āmmah fī Tārīkh al Fiqh al Islāmī*, 90-91.
117. *Concluding Essay*, 14-15.
118. 'Abd al Qādir, *Naẓrah 'Āmmah fī Tārīkh al Fiqh al Islāmī*, 90-91.

to his daughter Ḥafṣah, his executor. This does not mean that it was 'Umar's personal copy, because he died before the succession of the next *khalīfah*.

The time frame is quite reasonable for the compilation of the Qur'an, especially if we take into account the fact that Zayd was experienced in the compilation of the Qur'an. He not only recorded the revelation for the Prophet, but many people rallied round to help him in the task (including the Companions who had memorized the Qur'an).[119]

Furthermore, the lists of *Qurrā'* killed at the Battle of Yamāmah include many learned men like Sālim (the *mawlā* of Abū Ḥudhayfah), Thābit Ibn Qays, Ibn al Shammās, Zayd Ibn al Khaṭṭāb, Abū Dujanah Simāk Ibn Kharshah, and many others.[120] Ibn Kathīr counted over fifty of them.[121]

Even if the number were not so great, there was still fear of missing more learned *Qurrā'*, since further battles would inevitably cause the death of others, while there was always the danger that the younger *Qurrā'* might fail to preserve some part of the revelation.

Even though the Qur'an may have existed in written form during the Prophet's lifetime, this would not have allayed the fear, since it was not compiled in a book form, but was written on a variety of materials.[122]

Finally the *riwāyahs* of Ibn Sa'd[123] and al Suyūṭī[124] do not contradict that of al Bukhārī,[125] which attributes the compilation to Abū Bakr, if we consider that 'Umar was the one who suggested it to Abū Bakr, and that he helped Zayd Ibn Thābit and supervised the compilation.[126]

Dating the Compilation during Abū Bakr's Reign

The compilation of the Qur'an during the reign of Abū Bakr took place after the Battle of Yamāmah.[127] This is said to have been in 11 A.H.[128]

119. *Bukhārī*, 6:477.
120. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 6:334-40.
121. *Ibid.* See also p. 48 below.
122. *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 1:238.
123. *Al Ṭabaqāt al Kubrā*, 3:2.
124. *Itqān*, 1:166.
125. Bukhārī, 6:476-77.
126. *Ibid.* Ibn Abū Dāwūd in his *Al Maṣāḥif*, 6, states that Abū Bakr appointed 'Umar and Zayd Ibn Thābit to compile the Qur'an and told them to sit in front of the mosque and to write down what two witnesses testified to be part of the Qur'an. This version is said to be not authentic (*Itqān*, 1:167). Jeffery in his *Concluding Essay*, 14, argues that this contradiction indicates that Abū Bakr did not compile any official *muṣḥaf*, but according to the authentic tradition of Bukhārī, as we have seen, the suggestion came from 'Umar, who persuaded Abū Bakr.
127. *Bukhārī*, 6:477.
128. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 3:281-301.

Ibn Kathīr quotes Ibn Qāni' as saying that it was at the end of that year.[129] This date is supported by Ibn Ḥazm, who states that the conquest of Yamāmah was seven months and six days later, after the installation of Abū Bakr.[130] Some other scholars mention that it was in 12 A.H. Ibn Kathīr attributes this date to a group of biographers and chroniclers.[131] He tries to reconcile these opinions by suggesting that the conquest began in 11 A.H., and ended in 12 A.H.,[132] but finally opts for the year 12 A.H., because this date, according to him, is the most widely accepted.[133]

Based on the above discussion, it is difficult to accept the argument of researchers who doubt the compilation of Abū Bakr on the grounds that no agreement exists on the date of Yamāmah (i.e., whether it was in the eleventh or twelfth year of the Hijrah).[134]

The Number of *Qurrā'* Slain

An estimated six hundred[135] to seven hundred Muslims were slain at Yamāmah.[136] Al Ṭabarī states that among them were over three hundred men of the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*,[137] while Ibn Kathīr quotes Khalīfah Ibn Khayyāṭ (240/854) as having said that four hundred and fifty Muslims were slain, among them fifty from the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*.[138]

In the opinion of some scholars, all seven hundred men slain were *Qurrā'*, while others consider the number seventy to be correct.[139] However, it is certain that a considerable number of *Qurrā'* were slain at Yamāmah. As 'Umar is reported to have said: "Casualties were heavy among the *Qurrā'* of the Qur'an on the day of the Battle of Yamāmah."[140]

Before leaving the subject of the compilations of Abū Bakr and 'Uthmān, we should consider Burton's view that neither of these compilations took place.[141] This view is based on the opinion that neither event is logically necessary in order to account for the present-day *muṣḥaf*. However, to maintain this theory in practice means to deny the validity of such an immense number of accounts to the contrary that Burton's view is

129. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 6:326.
130. *Jumal Futūḥ al Islām*, 341.
131. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 6:226.
132. *Ibid.*
133. *Ibid.*, 332.
134. *Concluding Essay*, 14.
135. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 3:296.
136. *Qurṭubī*, 1:50.
137. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 3:296.
138. *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 6:340.
139. *Qurṭubī*, 1: 50.
140. *Bukhārī*, 6:477.
141. Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an*, 239.

surely untenable. In addition, the account given here, which is based on a consideration of the sources, provides a logical and inherently reasonable account of a historical process.

The Arrangement of the Surahs

The surahs of the Qur'an were not arranged chronologically as they were revealed. They were arranged differently. For instance, the second surah (*Surat al Baqarah*) was revealed in Madīnah after the Hijrah, while the ninety-sixth surah (*Sūrat al 'Alaq*) was the first surah revealed in Makkah.[142] If the arrangement of the *muṣḥaf* were chronological, *Sūrat al 'Alaq* would have been the first surah in the *muṣḥaf*. There are also some verses revealed in Madīnah that were put in Makkan surahs.[143] However, all scholars agree that the verses were arranged and put in their order according to the revelation.[144]

The scholars disagree as to whether the surahs were arranged according to the revelation (*tawqīf*) or through the endeavor of the Companions (ijtihad). Some scholars argue that the surahs were arranged by the Companions, because of the different arrangements of their personal *maṣāḥif*. It is said that the *muṣḥaf* of 'Alī was arranged chronologically, while the *muṣḥaf* of Ibn Mas'ūd began with *Surat al Baqarah*, then *Surat al Nisā'*, then *Surat Āl 'Imrān*, etc.[145]

Others say that ijtihad took place only in limited areas. They mean by this that the Qur'an, in its arrangement, is divided into four categories according to the length of the surahs (i.e., *al Ṭiwāl*, *al Mi'īn*, *al Mathānī* and *al Mufaṣṣal*).[146] In their opinion ijtihad was only in the arrangement of the surahs of each category; all agreed about the order and contents of these four categories.[147]

Others are of the opinion that all surahs were arranged according to the revelation, except for surahs 7 and 9. In this case, they rely on the following hadith: "'Uthmān was asked why *Sūrat al Tawbah* is put after *Sūrat al Anfāl*, and why there is no *basmalah* between them. He replied that it was because their theme is one, and because the Prophet passed away without informing them where to put the *basmalah*."[148]

142. Al Zuhrī, *Kitāb Tanzīl al Qur'ān*, 23.
143. *Itqān*, 1:38-47; *Qurṭubī*, 1:61; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Daqā'iq al Tafsīr*, 1:13.
144. More discussion will be forthcoming on pp. 45-47 in this chapter.
145. *Qurtubī*, 1:59; *Al Burhān*, 1:256; *Itqān*, 1:176; *Asrār Tartīb al Qur'ān*, 68.
146. *Itqān*, 1:179-80.
147. *Al Burhān*, 1:237; *Itqān*, 1:176.
148. *Al Musnad*, 1:398-99.

This opinion has been refuted on the grounds that much evidence indicates that the surahs are arranged according to revelation without a single exception. Here is some of the evidence as it has been reported in books of the *sunan.*

1. In Madīnah, a delegation came to the Prophet and one in the group, Abū Aws, reported the Prophet as having said: "I did not want to come without completing the parts of the Qur'an I recite daily."

   They asked the Companions: "How do you divide the Qur'an for the recitation?" They replied: "We divide them three surahs, five surahs, seven surahs, nine surahs, eleven surahs, thirteen surahs, and the part of *al Mufassal* from *Sūrat al Qāf* to the end."[149]
2. Zayd Ibn Thābit, the scribe of the revelation, said: "We were compiling and arranging the Qur'an from the fragments, in front of Allah's Apostle."[150]
3. The *basmalah* was a sign for the sealing of the surahs. Ibn 'Abbās stated that the Prophet did not know that a surah had been sealed until the revelation came to him with "In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful"; when it was revealed he knew that the surah was sealed.[151]

Al Nisaburi (828/1424) in his *Tafsīr* reports that whenever the Prophet received a surah, he asked the scribe to put it in its place.[152]

In light of the above, the compilation during the reign of Abū Bakr can only have consisted of compiling it into one book, not of arranging the surahs.[153] The same applies to the compilation of 'Uthmān. As Ibn al Bāqillānī states:

> The whole Qur'an, whose compilation and writing Allah commanded, excluding the abrogated verses, is what is contained in this *muṣḥaf* (of 'Uthmān). It is the same arrangement and style revealed to the Prophet in the very same manner of verses and surahs with no difference in word order, and the Ummah has received from the Prophet the arrangement of every verse and surah, and their places, as they have received the recitation of the Qur'an.[154]

Referring to the verse "It is for us to collect it and to promulgate it" (75:17), Ibn Ḥazm concludes that the Qur'an in all arrangements of its let-

149. *Tartīb Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal,* 18:29; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd,* 2:114-16.
150. *Al Ḥākim,* 2:229; *Al Murshid,* 44, 61; *Itqān,* 1:172; c.f. *Tartīb Musnad,* 18:30.
151. *Sunan Abī Dawūd,* 1:291; *Al Ḥākim,* 1:231; *Sharḥ al Sunnah,* 4:522; *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 35.
152. *Gharā'ib al Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al Furqān,* 1:32.
153. *Sharḥ al Sunnah,* 4:502.
154. *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 45; *Itqān,* 1:175.

ters, words, verses, and surahs is as revealed by Allah to his Prophet, who taught the people accordingly. Thus, no one can change anything.[155]

Some scholars say that the arrangement of the surahs of the Qur'an in the *muṣḥaf* has features that prove that it is *tawqīf*. For example:

1. the arrangement according to the beginning of the surahs with letters like *al Ḥawāmīm* (seven surahs begin with *Ḥāmīm* [surahs 40-46]);
2. the agreement of the beginning of a surah with the end of its predecessor; for example, the end of surah 1 and the beginning of surah 2;
3. *al Wazn fī al Lafẓ* (similarities of verse endings or *fawāṣil*); i.e., the end of surah 111 and the beginning of surah 112, which ends in *aḥad;* and
4. the similarity between surahs in general, like surahs 93 and 94.[156]

The differences among the *maṣāḥif* of the Companions are explained as being because they were personal copies. If it so happened that during the absence of one of them a surah (or more) was revealed, he would write it whenever it seemed convenient to him.[157]

We do not know about any of these *maṣāḥif* through an authentic chain, and nothing which is said about them should be accepted as a fact. Various contradictory accounts are given of the order of surahs in various *maṣāḥif*,[158] but in any case they do not correspond to the version of the final revelation.[159]

Finally, the hadith that ascribes to 'Uthmān the arrangement of surahs 8 and 9 is said to lack authenticity and has been criticized regarding its chain and its text. The chain includes a narrator, Yazīd al Fārisī, who is unknown and regarded as weak by Bukhārī and Tirmidhī.[160] The text (*matn*) of the hadith contradicts the authentic reports.

Ahmad Shākir argues: "This hadith is very weak and in fact has no basis in its *isnad*. In addition, its text throws doubts on the *basmalah* at the beginning of surahs, as though 'Uthmān had added to them or omitted some part of them as he liked, veneration be to him."[161]

Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā adopted the same opinion before Shākir, stating that a hadith narrated just by a single man was not accepted as regards the arrangement of the Qur'an, for which successive narration

155. Ibn Ḥazm, *Al Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al Aḥkām*, 4:93.
156. *Al Burhān*, 1:260; *Asrār Tartīb al Qur'ān*, 71.
157. *Muqaddimatān*, 32; *Manāhil*, 1:248-49.
158. *Al Fihrist*, 29-30.
159. *Qurṭubī*, 1:60.
160. *Bulūgh al Amānī*, 18:155.
161. *Musnad*, 1:329-30.

was necessary.[162] Elsewhere Rashīd Riḍā says: "An account narrated by a man like this, which is unique to him, is not sound and should not be accepted for the arrangement of the Qur'an which is transmitted with *tawātur*."[163] He also says that it is impossible that all surahs were arranged except these two surahs. All authorities state that the Prophet and his Companions recited surahs of the Qur'an in their order in and out of the prayers.[164]

Rashīd Riḍā refers to the following hadith: "The Prophet used to recite the whole Qur'an to Jibrīl and Jibrīl to him during Ramaḍān once every year, but in the last Ramaḍān before the Prophet passed away he recited it twice to Jibrīl and Jibrīl to him."[165] He argues that the order of these two surahs (8 and 9) must have been well known at that time.[166] It is an accepted principle in the science of the hadith that an isolated hadith is not accepted if it contradicts the verdict of reason and the verdict of the Qur'an.[167]

Furthermore, Mālik (179/795) is reported to have said: "The Qur'an was but compiled according to the revelation, as they (the Companions) heard it from the Prophet."[168] Al Qurṭubī (671/1272) argues that the arrangement of surahs as a written document is *tawqīf*, but the readers are allowed to recite differently from the order of the *muṣḥaf*.[169] Furthermore, al Qurṭubī concludes that the order of surahs is like that of verses; all have come to us from the Prophet as they were revealed to him from Allah. If someone were to change the order of any surah, it would be like changing the structure of the verses, letters, and words.[170]

Al Ḥārith al Muḥāsibī (243/857) is reported to have said that the compilation of the Qur'an was not invented, for the Prophet commanded his Companions to write it down. But it was written on various materials: *riqa'* (pieces of cloth), *aktāf* (shoulder-blades), and *'usub* (palm branches stripped of their leaves).

Abū Bakr simply ordered the Qur'an to be rewritten and to be assembled in one place. Different writings were found in the house of the

162. *Al Manār*, 9:585; *Musnad*, 1:330.
163. *Ḥāshiyah* on *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 12; *Musnad*, 1:330.
164. *Al Manār*, 9:585. Individual surahs are referred to repeatedly by name in the hadith. Thus, a cursory inspection of a single chapter of a single source (*Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 2:120-39) reveals no less than twenty-six such references.
165. *Bukhārī*, 6:485-86.
166. *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 12.
167. Al Khaṭīb, *Al Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al Riwāyah*, 432.
168. Ibn Kathīr, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 25.
169. Qurṭubī, *Al Jāmi' li Aḥkām al Qur'ān*, 1:53.
170. *Al Jāmi' li Aḥkām al Qur'ān*, 1:60.

Prophet (peace be upon him) containing the Qur'an. These were arranged and tied together by a cord to ensure that none were lost.[171]

Al Suyūṭī devoted a whole book to this subject, *Tanāsuq al Durar fī Tanāsub al Suwar,*[172] in which the subject is treated thoroughly and studied linguistically and rhetorically[173] to prove the succession of the verses and surahs through all 114 surahs of the Qur'an.

The Compilation and Arrangement of Verses in Their Surahs

The order of verses in the different surahs is agreed to have been ordained by revelation and was not left to the Prophet or his Companions.[174] This can be supported by the following evidence. Ibn al Zubayr said to 'Uthmān: "This verse, which is in *Sūrat al Baqarah,* 'Those who die and leave wives behind . . . without turning them out,' has been abrogated by another verse. Why then do you write it (in the Qur'an)? 'Uthmān said, 'Leave it (where it is), O son of my brother, for I will not shift anything of it (i.e., the Qur'an) from its original position.'"[175]

The surahs were revealed on specific occasions, and the verses served to answer a question or inquiry, and Jibrīl would tell the Prophet where to put them.[176] The Prophet is reported to have said: "Jibrīl came to me and commanded me to put this verse here in this surah (16:90): 'God commands justice, the doing of good and liberality to kith and kin . . .'"

Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said that the last verse revealed in the Qur'an is "And fear the day when ye shall be brought back to God. Then shall every soul be paid what it has earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly" (2:281) and then that Jibrīl said to the Prophet, "Put it after verse 280 of *Sūrat al Baqarah.*"[177]

'Umar is reported to have said: "I have not asked the Prophet about anything more than I asked him about *al kalālah,*[178] to the extent that he

171. *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān,* 1:238.

172. Published with a different title: *Asrār Tartīb al Qur'ān,* ed. 'Abd al Qādir Aḥmad 'Aṭā', 2nd ed. (Cairo 1398/1978). He also composed a short treatise on this subject entitled *Marāṣid al Maṭāli' fī Tanāsub al Maqāti' wa al Maṭāli',* Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, MS.S112, 114-17.

173. See, for instance, Ḥijāzī, *Al Waḥdah al Mawḍū'iyyah fī al Qur'ān al Karīm;* al Qāsim, *Al I'jāz al Bayānī fī Tartīb Āyāt al Qur'ān al Karīm wa Suwarih.*

174. *Itqān,* 1:172; Muir, *The Corân,* 37, says there were indeed recognized surahs or chapters.

175. *Bukhārī,* 6:46.

176. *Qurṭubī,* 1: 60.

177. *Al Mabānī,* 41; *Qurṭubī,* 1:60-61.

178. One who dies without leaving a son or a father. See *Qurṭubī,* 5:28-29, 5:76-78.

pointed his finger at my chest and said to me, 'Be satisfied with the verse revealed in summer, which is in the end of *Sūrat al Nisa.*'"[179]

A certain person asked the Prophet which verse would bring good to him and his people and was told: "The end of *Sūrat al Baqarah*, for it is one of the treasures of God's mercy from under His Throne which He gave to His people, and there is no good in this world and the next which it does not include."[180]

The Prophet would teach his Companions the Qur'an. If he became busy, he asked one of his learned Companions to teach it. 'Ubādah Ibn al Ṣāmit is reported to have said: "When the Prophet became busy and someone migrated to him, he used to ask one of us to teach him the Qur'an."[181]

The Prophet would also send teachers to distant places to teach the Qur'an. On one occasion, "he sent Mu'ādh and Abū Mūsā to Yemen and commanded them to teach the people the Qur'an."[182]

One of the Followers is reported to have said:

> The Companions who used to teach them the Qur'an said that they learned the Qur'an from the Prophet, ten verses, and they did not learn another unit of ten verses until they understood their meaning and fulfilled their requirements.[183]

However, the Qur'an itself indicates that each surah has its own internal arrangement. Thus Qur'an 11:13 challenges the Arabs in the Makkan period:

> Or they may say, "He forged it." Say, "Then bring ten surahs forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than God, if you speak the truth."

The challenge of the Qur'an continued in the Madinan period:

> And if you are in doubt as to what we have revealed from time to time to our servant, then produce a surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. (2:23)

179. *Musnad*, 1:231; *Itqān*, 1:173.
180. *Mishkāt al Maṣābīḥ* (English Trans.), 2:458.
181. *Tartīb al Musnad*, 18:9.
182. *Ibid.*, 18:8.
183. *Ibid*, 18:9.

The Prophet also recited surahs in the prayers among his Companions, which indicates that they have a fixed revealed order (*tawqīf*). Furthermore, al Suyūṭī points out, it would have been impossible for the Companions to arrange the verses in an order different from the one they heard the Prophet use in his recitation, which is a strong argument for *tawqīf*.[184] Al Suyūṭī quotes Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī, Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib al Qaysī, Ibn al Bāqillanī, Mālik Ibn Anas, al Bayhaqī, and Ibn al Ḥaṣṣār as supporting him on the succession of verses in the different surahs.[185]

The Problem of Missing Verses

Zayd Ibn Thābit is quoted as saying of the compilation of Abū Bakr:

> I started looking for the Qur'an and collecting it from (what was written on) palm stalks, thin white stones, and also from the men who knew it by heart, till I found the last verse of *Sūrat al Tawbah* (repentance) with Abū Khuzaymah al Anṣārī and I did not find it with anybody other than him. The verse is: "Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty . . . (till the end of *Barā'ah*)." (9:128-29)[186]

Abū Khuzaymah was the only one who had kept this verse in a written form, for there were many *Qurrā'* who had committed the whole Qur'an to memory.[187] For instance, when Zayd Ibn Thābit had reached the end of "Then they turn aside: God hath turned their hearts (from the light) for they are a people that understood not" (9:127), Ubayy Ibn Ka'b informed him that the Prophet had taught him two verses after that and recited verses 9:128-29:

> Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty: ardently anxious is he over you: to the believers is he most kind and merciful. But if they turn away, say: "God suffices me: there is no god but He, on Him is my trust—He the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme.

Ubayy added that this was the last verse of the Qur'an to be revealed.[188]

184. *Itqān*, 1:174.
185. *Itqān*, 1:172-76.
186. *Bukhārī*, 6:48. The translation was taken from Yūsuf 'Alī with modification.
187. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:16: *Itqān*, 1:101.
188. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 9; *Muqaddimatān*, 35.

In another version it is reported that Zayd said:

> A verse from *Sūrat al Aḥzāb* was missed by me when we copied the Qur'an, and I used to hear Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaymah Ibn Thābit al Anṣārī. (That verse was 33:23: "Among the believers are men who have been true in their covenant with God.") We then added it to its surah in the *muṣḥaf*.[189]

The same theory advanced with respect to the missing verses of *Sūrat al Tawbah* can be applied here, with the addition that Zayd himself had committed this verse to memory, as clearly stated by him in this account.

It has been argued that this episode of the missing verse of *Sūrat al Aḥzāb* took place during the compilation of 'Uthmān.[190] Nevertheless, Ibn Kathīr asserts that the missing of verse 33:23 definitely occurred during the compilation of Abū Bakr, because it is confirmed by another version of the same tradition that is regarded as authentic.[191]

A version is narrated by Ibn Abī Dāwūd[192] in which Khuzaymah Ibn Thābit came with these two verses from the end of *Sūrat al Tawbah*, and 'Umar said that if they had been three verses he would have made them a surah. Then he suggested that he should decide on a surah and annex them to it. Consequently, they were put at the end of surah 9.[193] This version, however, is said to lack authenticity, for it has three problems in its *isnād*, the text (*matn*) contradicts successive and sound reports that state that the Prophet taught his Companions the Qur'an and the order of verses and surahs. In addition, this version states that Abū Khuzaymah put the two verses at the end of *Sūrat al Tawbah*, though it is agreed unanimously that he was not one of the scribes who participated in compiling the Qur'an.[194] Indeed, Ibn Abī Dāwūd himself narrates in the same book, indeed on the same page, another version that contradicts the above, which states that Ubayy Ibn Ka'b reported that when they compiled the Qur'an, the scribes thought that 9:127 was the end of a surah. Then he

189. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:11; *Bukhārī*, 6:479-80; *Mishkāt al Maṣābiḥ*, 2:470, English translation by James Robson.
190. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:21.
191. *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 15.
192. C.f. *Musnad*, 3:163-64.
193. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 30. Ibn Abī Dāwūd in another version related this event to 'Uthmān, see p. 31, who suggested to seal the last revealed surah with these two verses.
194. Al Bannā, *Bulūgh al Amānī*, 18:173. Aḥmad Shākir has also refuted this version on the grounds that it is *munkar shādhdh* in contradiction to the *Mutawātir*. See *Musnad*, 3:163-64.

informed them: "The Prophet taught me two verses after this, 'Verily has come unto you a Messenger . . . .'"[195]

In support of the latter hadith, there is a hadith in *Al Musnad* on the authority of al Barā', who is reported to have said: "The last surah revealed completely to the Prophet is *Sūrat Barā'ah.*"[196] Thus, it is a fact that the end of this surah was as well known to the Companions as the beginning and the body of the surah. Nevertheless, Ubayy is reported to have said that those two verses were the last revealed verses.[197] They were revealed exactly in the year 9 A.H., and the Prophet sent 'Alī with this surah to recite it and read it in the Hajj congregation at Makkah.[198]

Furthermore, al Nasā'ī (303/915), in his *Fadā'il al Qur'ān,* reported the hadith narrated by Zayd Ibn Thābit about the compilation of the Qur'an during the time of Abū Bakr and did not mention the missing two verses of *Surat al Tawbah.*[199] Ibn Ḥazm (456/1063) accepts the validity of the hadith of Zayd that he found the two verses with Khuzaymah, but emphasizes that this refers only to the written form, as it had been memorized by Zayd himself.[200] According to al Qurṭubī, the verses were substantiated by Khuzaymah but with the consensus of the Companions.[201] Ibn al Bāqillānī, on the other hand, refutes the validity of this addition to this hadith and states that the Qur'an was recorded in written form without any exception.[202]

In the light of all the above accounts, the conclusion is that the verses were arranged and put in their order without exception.

The Meaning of the Term *Jam' al Qur'ān*

The word *jama'a* in the phrase *jama'a al Qur'ān* has two meanings. One meaning is "to memorize," which occurs in the Qur'an in this sense in the phrase *inna 'alaynā jam'ahū wa qur'ānahū.*[203] The expression *jāmi' al Qur'ān* and its plural, *jummā' al 'Qur'ān,* are likewise used to mean "a man or people who commit the whole book to their memories." Thus, 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Amr is reported to have said, "*Jama'tu al Qur'ān*

195. *Al Maṣāḥif* 9:128-29; *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 56; *Tartīb al Musnad,* 18:173. The author of *Bulūgh al Amānī,* 18:54-55, and 173-74, accepts this version as a sound hadith accepted by al Ḥākim.
196. *Tartīb al Musnad,* 18:54.
197. *Ibid.,* 174. The report is regarded as sound. See *Bulūgh al Amānī,* 174-75.
198. *Tartīb al Musnad,* 18:156-58.
199. *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān,* 63.
200. Ibn Ḥazm, *al Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al Aḥkām,* 6:832.
201. Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr,* 1:56.
202. *Nukat al Intiṣār,* 331.
203. 75:17.

fa qara'tu bi hi fi kulli laylah . . ."[204] meaning, "I have committed the Qur'an to memory and recite the (whole) Qur'an every night . . ." In this respect, Ibn Sīrīn is reported as having said that 'Uthmān memorized the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet; i.e., "*Jama'a 'Uthmān al Qur'ān 'alā 'ahd Rasūl Allāh ṣalla Allāh 'alayh wa sallam, yaqūlu: ḥafiẓahu.*"[205]

The other meaning of the word *jama'a* is "to collect and write down." We find this in such expressions as "*Abū Bakr awwal man jama'a al Qur'ān bayn al lawḥayn,*"[206] meaning "Abu Bakr was the first to compile the Qur'an in a written form, as a book (between two boards)."

Many Companions committed the whole Qur'an to memory.[207] This study has revealed more than thirty of them.[208] In addition, hundreds of Companions memorized some parts and surahs.[209]

The many reasons for the Companions to memorize the whole Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet included the excellence of the language of the Qur'an for the Arabs[210] and the use of the Qur'an for prayers and private and collective recitations.[211]

The Qur'an also served as a book of *sharī'ah* (law) and of social, business, and state affairs.

The Prophet urged the Companions to recite the Qur'an collectively and privately, especially in night prayers during the month of Ramaḍān, and to memorize some verses, surahs, or the whole Qur'an.[212] Those who have memorized the Qur'an are highly honored and rewarded in the hereafter.[213]

Also the Arabs' memory, as Muir states, was tenacious.[214] Some Companions went to the extreme of reciting the whole book in one night. However, when the Prophet was informed, he asked them not to seal the Qur'an in less than three days or a week.[215]

204. Al Nasā'ī, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 101.
205. Al Balādhurī, *Ansāb al Ashrāf*, part IV, 1:489.
206. *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, 5.
207. *Ma'rifat al Qurrā' al Kibār*, 29-39; *Itqān*, 1:201-04.
208. These are those whom we know by name; we have no precise information about anonymous *Qurrā'*, although on one occasion seventy of them are said to have been killed, as early as 5 A.H. See *Bukhārī*, 5:287-88.
209. *Itqān*, 1:200.
210. Ibn al Bāqillānī, *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 33-50.
211. *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 4:19-31; al Nasā'ī, 2:120-39.
212. *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 4:427-99.
213. *Ibid.*, 427-36.
214. *The Corān*, 38.
215. *Al Musnad*, 10:43; al Nasā'ī, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 101-03.

On the other hand, Anas Ibn Mālik is reported as having said that only four persons committed the Qur'an to memory at the time of the Prophet.[216] Although many interpretations of this statement have been offered, the only reasonable one is that he meant among his tribe of Khazraj, since he was boasting of their achievements compared to the other branch of the *Anṣār* (i.e., *Aws*).[217]

Thus, *Jummā' al Qur'ān* are those who have memorized the Qur'an and recite it by heart. The words *Ḥuffaẓ* and *Qurrā'* have exactly the same meaning.[218]

Shaban[219] maintains that the *Qurrā'* refer to *Ahl al Qura* (villagers) rather than readers of the Qur'an. However, this hypothesis seems to be groundless since all standard references indicate that it is the readers who are being referred to. Furthermore, no lexicographical source gives *qurra'* as a derivation of the word *qaryah*; the only accepted plural form is *qarawiyyūn*.

However, as mentioned earlier the Prophet had numerous scribes who took down the revelation to aid memorization.[220]

The Words *Ṣaḥīfah* and *Muṣḥaf* and Their Origins

The word *ṣaḥīfah* (pl. *ṣuḥuf* and *ṣaḥā'if*), as al Jawharī states, means "a book," as it is found in Qur'an 87:18-19: "And this is in the book of earliest (Revelations), the book of Abraham and Moses." It means the book revealed to them.[221]

The words *muṣḥaf, miṣḥaf,* or *maṣḥaf* mean "a (book) containing written sheets between two covers." Al Azhari is reported to have said: "It is called *muṣḥaf* because it was made a container of written sheets between two covers."[222]

There is a hadith that proves that the Prophet used the word *muṣḥaf* in reference to the written form of the Qur'an. 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn al 'Āṣ supports this fact by relating that a man came to the Prophet and said to him, "This son of mine reads the *muṣḥaf* in the daytime. . ."[223] Indeed, in another version, the Prophet is reported as having forbidden travel with a

216. *Bukhārī*, 6:488.
217. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 70-76; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:46-54.
218. Al Baghawī in his book *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, vol. IV, p. 428, says: "*Kull Shay' in Jamā'tahu fa-qad qara'tahu.*"
219. M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A New Interpretation I*, 23, 50-51.
220. See pp. 25-27 of this study.
221. *Lisān al 'Arab*, 9:186.
222. *Ibid.*
223. *Musnad*, 10:110-11.

muṣḥaf to the land of the enemy, lest the enemy take it (and destroy or dishonor it).[224]

Thus the word *muṣḥaf* was known to the Muslims, which indicates that they had no need to borrow or invent it after the Prophet's death. In fact, the word was known to the Arabs even before Islam and is found in a verse of the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al Qays: *Atat ḥijajun ba'dī 'alayhā fa aṣbaḥat ka khaṭṭi zabūrin fī maṣāḥif ruhbān* (Some years elapsed since my presence, and it became like the writing of psalms in the *maṣāḥif* of monks).[225]

The word *muṣḥaf* is believed to be of Ethiopian origin,[226] and that it was brought back by the Muslims who emigrated to Ethiopia, and that Ibn Mas'ūd suggested this name for the compilation of Abū Bakr.[227]

However, as stated earlier, the word *muṣḥaf*, whether or not of Ethiopian origin, was in the Arabic vocabulary long before. It is unlikely that Ibn Mas'ūd, who took no part in the compilation, should be involved in this way. In short, this account cannot be accepted. It is maintained also that the word *muṣḥaf* does not necessarily pertain to the entire text of the Qur'an but can also refer to a portion of it.[228] However, in the references mentioned above, the entire text is referred to. Some personal codices (manuscripts and fragments) may not have included the entire text, but the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, based upon the first compilation, included the entire Qur'an without any exception.

Theory of *Naskh*

Most scholars agree on the existence of *naskh* in the Qur'an. However, they differ on many points, particularly about the meaning and modes of *naskh* and their examples.[229]

They all agree[230] on the first mode, namely, *naskh al ḥukm wa baqā' al tilāwah* (the abrogation of the ruling and keeping its recitation), for example, 2:240, which is said to have been abrograted by 2:234.[231]

The second mode of *naskh* discussed is *naskh al ḥukm wa al tilāwah* (abrogration of the ruling and its recitation). It is said that some verses and

224. *Bukhārī*, 4:146.
225. *Dīwān Imru' al Qays*, 88.
226. *Concluding Essay*, 46.
227. *Itqān*, 1:166. Al Suyūtī states that the *isnād* of this report is interrupted (*munqaṭi'*).
228. Martin Hinds, "The Siffin Arbitration Agreement," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17, 95-96.
229. Al Juwaynī, *Al Burhān fī Uṣūl al Fiqh*, 2:1293-300; *Al Ghazzālī al Mustaṣfā*, 1:123-24; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al Aḥkām*, 1:440-41; *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 1:432-33.
230. Except for the Mu'tazilī scholars, who are reported to have objected to the theory of *naskh* entirely. See *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 1:435; al Juwaynī, *Al Burhān fī Uṣūl al Fiqh*, 2:1312.
231. *Al Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al Aḥkām*, 2:263; *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 1:435; al Āmidī, *al Iḥkām*, 2:264.

parts of verses were eliminated from the Qur'an. For example, Ibn 'Umar is reported to have said that the Prophet taught two men a surah and they would recite it. One night while they were offering prayers, they could not remember a single *ḥarf* and they came next day to the Prophet and told him what happened. The Prophet informed them that this was a part of what had been abrogated, and told them to forget about it.[232]

It is also said that surah 33 used to contain two hundred verses, and that when 'Uthmān compiled the *maṣāḥif* he could find only what is present today.[233] In another version it is said that this surah was similar to surah 2.[234] Moreover, Ḥudhayfah is reported to have said that what we read of surah 9 is less than a fourth of the original.[235]

Ibn 'Umar is reported to have said:

> Nobody should say that he has committed the whole Qur'an to memory, for he does not know what is the whole Qur'an. There is much of the Qur'an which has been eliminated. He should rather say that he has memorized what is found of it.[236]

Finally, al Thawrī is reported to have said that he came to know that some *Qurrā'* among the Companions were killed fighting Musaylimah on the day of Yamāmah and, as a result, some *ḥurūf* of the Qur'an were lost.[237]

The last mode of *naskh* brought into the discussion is *mansūkh al tilāwah dūn al ḥukm* (abrogated from recitation without the ruling). This means that some verses are abrogated in recitation and although they are not recitable, they are still judged to exist in practice. For example, some *Qurrā'* were killed at Bi'r Ma'ūnah and part of the revelation was eliminated. This was: "Inform our people that we have met our Lord, He is well pleased with us and has satisfied us."[238] Al Suhaylī points out that this sentence clearly differs from the style of the Qur'an.[239] This stylistic fact demonstrates the weakness of this report.[240]

Another example concerns the prohibition of marriage to foster sisters referred to in the verse: "Prohibited to you (for marriage) are . . . foster sis-

232. *Itqān*, 3:74. The *isnād* is weak, as pointed out by al Ghamārī, *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 11.
233. *Itqān*, 3:72. The *isnād* is not authentic. See *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 12.
234. *Al Īḍāḥ*, 46; *Itqān*, 3:72.
235. *Itqān*, 3:75.
236. *Al Īḍāḥ*, 72.
237. *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 18-19. Al Ghamārī attributes it to the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al Raz-zāq. He adds that this account is rejected, and he considers it false and contradictory to the Qur'an.
238. *Itqān*, 3:75.
239. *Al Rawḍ al Unuf*, 6:206-07.
240. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 81.

ters" (4:23). In discussing the number of times of suckling necessary to establish the foster relationship, al Rāzī quotes a hadith attributed to 'Ā'ishah that states that the number was reduced from ten to five. In this case, ten sucklings is *mansūkh al tilāwah wa al ḥukm* and five is *mansūkh al tilāwah dūn al ḥukm* since the Qur'an refers to neither number.

This report is narrated by 'Ā'ishah in different versions. One version states that the verse of suckling was recited during the lifetime of the Prophet and he left it as a part of the Qur'an.[241] Makkī refers to the weakness of this version in that it contradicts both the Qur'an and reason.[242] He also regards this example as odd in the matter of abrogation in that the abrogating passage is not recited, so that the abrogated passage and the verdict of abrogation both stand.[243]

After this Makkī assigns it to the second mode of *naskh*. Al Suyūṭī argues that what was meant by 'Ā'ishah is that the Prophet was near death when it was eliminated, or that some people did not know of the abrogation until after the death of the Prophet.[244]

Al Jaṣṣāṣ (370/980) rejects this version because it indicates that the abrogation took place after the death of the Prophet.[245] In addition, al Ṭaḥāwī (321/933) considers the *riwāyah* to be weak and objects to it strongly.[246]

Furthermore, al Naḥḥās points out that Mālik Ibn Anas, despite narrating this hadith, rejects it and says that a single suckling causes *taḥrīm*, since this is the implication in the Qur'anic verse already mentioned. Al Naḥḥās (338/949) adds that Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Thawr also questioned this hadith, since they believed that three sucklings make *taḥrīm*, and refer to a hadith in this connection.[247]

In addition, al Naḥḥās states that if this version were authentic, 'Ā'ishah herself would have reported it to the committee of scribes, and then it would have been included in the *maṣāḥif*.

Qur'an 15:9 also states: "We have without doubt sent down the message; and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

Ḥammūdah argues that this report has come to us in many contradictory versions. Once it appears as *mansūkh al tilāwah* and at other times does not. In one version the prescriptions of five and ten times are revealed in a single verse, while in another version the ten sucklings were revealed

241. Al Nawawī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al Nawawī*, 10:29-30.
242. Al Qaysī, *Al Īḍāḥ li Nāshikh al Qur'ān wa Mansūkhih*, 45.
243. *Ibid.*, 44.
244. *Itqān*, 3:63.
245. *Aḥkām al Qur'ān*, 2:125.
246. *Mushkil al Āthār*, 3:6.
247. *Al Nāsikh wa al Mansūkh*, 11.

prior to the five sucklings.[248] To conclude, the hadith is unauthentic and groundless.

The third example of *naskh* is what is said to have been a Qur'anic verse: "*Al shaykh wa al shaykhah,* when they commit adultery, stone them as exemplary punishment from Allah; and Allah is Mighty and Wise."[249] The verdict of stoning is agreed to be sunnah, as 'Umar and 'Alī were reported to have mentioned that stoning is established by the sunnah of the Prophet.[250] Bukhārī, who narrates the penalty of stoning, does not mention the addition of "*al shaykh wa al shaykhah.*" Al 'Asqalānī suggests that Bukhārī's omission may have been intentional, because only one *Rāwī* among many has mentioned it, and the *Rāwī* could have been mistaken. Al 'Asqalānī adds that the great scholars (*A'immah* and *Ḥuffāẓ*) have narrated the hadith, but they have not mentioned this addition.[251] Al Ṭaḥāwi discusses it in detail and concludes that the stoning of a married person is established by the sunnah of the Prophet. He supports his view by quoting 'Alī as having said: "I have flogged her according to the book of Allah, and stoned her according to the sunnah of the Prophet."[252] This example is said to be the best one of *mansūkh al tilāwah dūn al ḥukm.*[253]

In addition to the *riwāyah* of "*al shaykh wa al shaykhah,*" Marwān Ibn al Ḥakm is reported to have suggested to Zayd Ibn Thābit that he include it, but the latter refused on the grounds that it was contradictory, saying: "Don't you see that young married people are stoned if they commit adultery?"[254] This would imply that Zayd was left to decide whether to accept or reject material for inclusion in the Qur'an. Moreover, Marwān is not known to have had any role in compiling the Qur'an. Al Ghamārī states that this version is *munkar,* and that Zayd could not have omitted something simply because it contradicted the stoning of young married people.[255]

Also, 'Umar is reported to have said that when it was revealed he came to the Prophet and asked him permission to write it, but he felt that the Prophet was unwilling for it to be written. Then 'Umar said to Zayd Ibn Thābit: "Don't you see that if the *shaykh* commits adultery and is unmarried, he is flogged and that if the young man commits adultery and is married, he is stoned?"[256] However, it was unusual for the Prophet to be unwill-

248. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt,* 86.
249. *Itqān,* 3:72.
250. *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 12:117-20.
251. *Ibid.,* 12:117.
252. *Mushkil al Āthār,* 3:2.
253. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt,* 84-85.
254. *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 12:143.
255. *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah,* 17. The term *munkar* signifies a hadith that is reported by a weak chain of narrators that contradicts more authentic information.
256. *Itqān,* 3:76. Shaykh in this context means an old man.

ing for a verse revealed to him to be written down, and it is doubtful that 'Umar could object to a verse that he believed to be revealed from Allah.[257] Al Ghāmārī states that Allah would not have omitted a verse from the Qur'an just because some people objected to it. He adds that all these contradictions support the view that what some call the *āyat al rajm* (verse of *al rajm*) is not a verse at all. It is at most a hadith.[258]

The fourth example of *mansūkh al tilāwah dūn al ḥukm* is as follows:

> If the son of Ādam were to ask for a *wādī* of wealth and be given it, he would ask for a second one, and if he were to ask for a second and be given it, he would ask for a third, and nothing would fill the gullet of the son of Adam except dust; and Allah accepts the repentance of the one who repents. Verily the faithful religion in the sight of Allah is the straight path (*al Ḥanīfiyyah*), which is not polytheism, not Judaism, and not Christianity. And he who does good deeds will not be rejected.[259]

Al Suhaylī (581/1185) states that this alleged Qur'anic verse would in any case be *khabar*, not *ḥukm* (i.e., narrative as opposed to command, prohibition, etc.), and therefore not subject to the rules of abrogations.[260]

The authentic *riwāyah* of this hadith mentions only that the Prophet read surah 98 to Ubayy without mentioning the addition.[261] In another version, Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said that he did not know if this (addition) was from the Qur'an or not.[262] However, Ubayy himself is reported to have said also that they thought that it was from the Qur'an until *Sūrat al Takāthur* was revealed.[263]

Al Alūsī considers that the addition attributed to Ubayy was not authentic.[264] However, Ḥammūdah maintains that stylistically, in his view, it is a hadith because the words *yahūdiyyah, naṣrāniyyah* and *ḥanīfiyyah* are not found in the Qur'an, while the wording is similar to the utterances of a hadith.[265]

257. *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 17-18.
258. *Ibid.*, 18.
259. *Al Ḥākim*, 2:224; *Itqān*, 3:73. Ubayy Ibn Ka'b is reported to have said that the Prophet read surah 98 to him and it included this addition.
260. *Al Rawḍ al Unuf*, 2:176.
261. Bukhārī, 6:256-57.
262. *Fatḥ al Barī*, 11:213.
263. *Ibid.*; *Miskkāt al Maṣābīḥ*, 2:671.
264. *Rūḥ al Ma'ānī*, 30:208.
265. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 80.

Fifth, Abū Mūsā is reported to have said that they would read a surah, which they thought was similar to one of *al Musabbiḥāt*,[266] which they forgot, but that they remembered from it: "O ye who believe, do not say that which ye do not; it will be certified on your necks and you will be questioned about it on the Day of Judgment."[267]

Sixth, 'Umar is reported to have said that they would recite: "Do not reject your fathers, for this will be (accounted) disbelief against you." Then he said to Zayd, "Was it so?" He replied, "Yes."[268]

Seventh, 'Umar is also reported to have asked 'Abd al Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf if he did not find in what was revealed, "Fight as you have been fighting at first," for it was not found now. 'Abd al Raḥmān replied that it was from the part eliminated from the Qur'an.[269]

Eighth, Maslamah ibn Khālid al Anṣārī is reported to have said that two verses from the Qur'an were not recorded:

> Those who believed and suffered exile and fought in the path of Allah, with their wealth and persons, rejoice, for you are successful and those who gave them asylum and aided and defended them against the people with whom Allah is angry. No person knows what delights of the eyes are kept hidden for them—as a reward for their (good) deeds."[270]

It is obvious that these two verses are borrowed with little change from Qur'an 8:74 and 32:17 and joined together.

Ninth, 'Ā'ishah is reported to have recited Qur'an 33:56: "God and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet . . ." with the addition "And those who pray in the first line." This addition is reported to have been a hadith,[271] which indicates that the report of 'Ā'ishah is no more than a sunnah.

Finally, it is said that the surahs that are sometimes combined into one surah known as *Qunūt* and sometimes known separately as *Sūrat al Khal* and *Sūrat al Ḥafad* were eliminated from the Qur'an.[272]

However, Ibn al Bāqillānī objects to his theory of *mansūkh al tilāwah*. He quotes a group of scholars who object to this kind of abroga-

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266. *Al Musabbiḥāt* are those surahs that begin with *tasbīḥ* (glorifying), such as surahs 61 and 62.

267. *Itqān*, 3:74; *Burhān*, 2:37.

268. *Itqān*, 3:74. The *riwāyah* is not authentic, because there is a break in the transmission. See *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 13.

269. *Itqān*, 3:64.

270. *Ibid.*

271. *Ibid.*, 3:73. The *ḥadīth* is not authentic, because its *isnād* includes two unknown *rāwīs*. *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*,14.

272. *Itqān*, 3:75. Al Ghāmārī states that what is called Surat al Ḥafad was composed by 'Umar. *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 19.

tion, because the reports are isolated and the revelation of the Qur'an and its abrogation cannot be judged by isolated reports, which are not sufficient evidence.[273] A contemporary researcher has studied the theory of *naskh* and concludes that all these reports are fabricated, although he agrees in general to the *mansūkh al tilāwah wa al ḥukm*, since the elimination took place during the period of revelation and the lifetime of the Prophet.[274]

However, many reasons exist for objecting to both kinds of *mansūkh al tilāwah*, either with or without the *ḥukm*:

1. All examples given are either not authentic, contradict each other, or are isolated reports in many different versions.
2. The examples differ from the style of the Qur'an, as can be seen by comparing the end of surahs 2 and 3 with *Du'ā' al Qunūt* (a prayer usually recited in salah). It is not similar with the style of the Qur'an.
3. All *Uṣūlīs* agree that the Qur'an is substantiated only by successive reports (*tawatur*). These examples are not successive and therefore are anomalous reports.[275]

Although the Shi'ahs and the *Ahl al Sunnah* generally agree on the existence of *mansūkh al tilāwah*,[276] some Shi'ah scholars claim that the *Sunnī* scholars' acceptance of the theory of *mansūkh al tilāwah* proves that the Qur'an has been corrupted.[277] Western scholars have various opinions on the subject. Nöldeke accepts the traditional accounts of *mansūkh al tilāwah*,[278] while Burton rejects the entire concept as a fabrication.[279] Wansbrough, on the other hand and in line with his general approach, regards the whole problem as a projection back in time of later disputes.[280]

273. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 103-04; *Itqān*, 3:75.
274. Muṣṭafā Zayd, *Al Naskh fī al Qur'ān al Karīm*, 1:282-83. Supporting his view, he quotes al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 2:480, who states that it is not impossible that Allah would make his Prophet forget some (verses) revealed to him. 'Abd al Karīm al Khaṭīb in his book *Min Qaḍāyā al Qur'ān*, 235-36, suggests that in the final revealed version some verses were transferred to other surahs rather than being eliminated, but he does not quote any references to support his view.
275. *Itqān*, 3:75; *Burhān*, 2:36; *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 77; *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 266; *Dhawq al Ḥalāwah*, 19-20.
276. Al Ṭūsī, *al Tibyān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*, 1:13.
277. Al Khū'ī, *al Bayān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*, 201; *Tafsīr al Qummī*, 1:22-25 (Introduction of the Editor, Ṭayyib al Mūsawī al Jazā'irī).
278. Nöldeke, *Geschichte Des Qorāns*, 1:234-61.
279. Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an*, 238.
280. Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, 197.

The Shi'ah Opinions on the Alteration of the Qur'an

Many *riwāyahs* in Shi'ah sources claim that the Qur'an has been altered by the omission of certain parts, which they claim was done intentionally because these parts concerned the position of *Ahl al Bayt*.[281]

In one example, Abū 'Abd Allāh is reported to have said that the Qur'an as revealed by Jibrīl to Muhammad consisted of seventeen thousand verses.[282] He is also reported to have said that surah 98 includes the names of seventy Qurayshī men and the names of their fathers.[283]

Abū 'Abd Allāh also is reported to have directed one of his followers to read the present-day Qur'an, saying that when the *Qā'im* came he should read the original Qur'an in its complete form.[284]

Sūrat al Aḥzāb is said to have been equal in length to *Sūrat al An'ām*, and the virtues of *Ahl al Bayt* are said to have been omitted.[285] Moreover, Abū 'Abd Allāh is reported to have said that the verse, *"Ummatun hiya arbā min ummah"* has been corrupted, and that it should be corrected to be read as, *"A'immatun hiya azkā min a'immatikum."*[286]

Certain Shi'ah scholars also claim that the meaning of certain verses has been deliberately distorted, an example of which is Qur'an 43:4: "And verily, it is in the Mother of the Books, in Our Presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom." The word *'aliyy*, which means high (in dignity) as it appears in the context, is assumed by the scholars to refer to 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.[287] Furthermore, al Qummī states that the Qur'an has been altered by putting one *ḥarf* in the place of another and that it contains that which is not in accordance with the revelation.[288] Thus it is said that the *muṣḥaf* of Fāṭimah was three times the size of the existing *muṣḥaf* and that it did not contain a single *ḥarf* of the latter.[289]

Furthermore, it is said that no one has the whole Qur'an except the *A'immah*.[290] In addition, it is claimed that two surahs are missing from the

281. *Al Uṣūl min al Kāfi*, 2:631-34; *Uṣūl al Kāfi*, ed. by 'Abd al Ḥusayn Ibn al Muẓaffar, vol. II, part V, 178-204.
282. *Al Uṣūl min al Kāfi*, 2:634.
283. *Ibid.*
284. *Ibid.*, 633.
285. *Rūḥ al Ma'ānī*, 1:24.
286. *Ibid.*
287. *Tafsīr al Qummī*, 1:28-29.
288. Ibid., 5. The editor, al Mūsawī al Jazā'irī, agrees with the author and gives as an example the alleged omission of *Fī 'Aliyy* after "O Apostle! Proclaim the (message) which has been sent to you from your Lord" (5:70). Yūsuf Alī's translation, 264.
289. *Uṣūl al Kāfi*, vol. 2, part 5, 199-204.
290. *Ibid.*, 178-81.
291. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, 2:102-3; *Mukhtaṣar al Tuḥfah al Ithnay 'Ashriyyah*, Introduction of Muḥibb al Dīn al Khaṭīb, 31.

muṣḥaf concerning the rank of *Ahl al Bayt: Sūrat al Walāyah* and *Sūrat al Nūrayn.*[291] They consist of some Qur'anic verses brought from different surahs with some addition and alteration. Some Shi'ahs believe that these reports were fabricated, and no original source is given for them in Shi'ah reference works.[292]

Stylistically, many errors bear witness to their lack of authenticity.[293] Moreover, 'Alī came after 'Uthmān and ruled for several years. He was succeeded by his son al Ḥasan, who ruled for several months. They would have been able to correct any errors or to put everything in its proper order if any had been altered. Furthermore, 'Alī is reported to have agreed with 'Uthmān, to have supported him in the matter of compilation, and to have defended him against the rebels.[294]

Most Shi'ahs also reject the theory of alteration on the grounds of the nonauthenticity and fabrication of the reports,[295] of the stylistic differences and linguistic errors,[296] and because the title, given as *al Nūrayn* (referring to the Prophet and 'Alī), is known historically to have been invented later in the seventh century of the Hijrah.[297] Some reports are said to be authentic, although they indicate that the *muṣḥaf* has been altered. However, they are interpreted as referring to interpretation added to the text as *tafsīr* only and not as part of the Qur'an.[298] Indeed, the *maṣāḥif* that exist today among all Muslims are the same. The *maṣāḥif* printed in Egypt were accepted and copied in Iran and other places, without any alterations, additions, or omissions.

They agree in the recitation and orthography, though they may differ concerning the meanings and *tafsīr*.

Two Alleged Episodes That Cast Doubt

Before concluding this chapter it is appropriate to mention briefly the two alleged episodes that have sometimes been referred to as casting doubt on the trustworthiness of the text of the Qur'an.

292. *Tafsīr Ālā' al Raḥmān*, the author's introduction, 16-17.
293. *Ibid.*
294. *Al Kāmil*, 3:112.
295. Al Ṭūsī, *Al Tibyān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*, 1:3; *Tafsīr Ālā' al Raḥmān*, 17-18; al Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al Bayān fī Tafsīr al Qur'ān*, 1:15; *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 365.
296. *Tafsīr Ālā' al Raḥmān*, 16-17; Darāz, *Madkhal*, 40.
297. Darāz, *Madkhal*, 40.
298. *Tafsīr Ālā' al Raḥmān*, 18-19.
299. See, for example, al Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 23:49-56; 'Iyāḍ, *Al Shifā*, 2:282-305; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:229-81; al Qāsimī, *Tafsīr*, 12:36-57; Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl al Qur'ān*, 4:2431-36; 'Abd al Karīm al Khaṭīb, *Al Tafsīr al Qur'ānī*, 3:1061-85; al Albānī, *Naṣb al Majānīq li Nasf Qiṣṣat al Gharānīq*; A.M. Ahsan, "The 'Satanic' Verses and Orien-talism," *Hamdard Islamicus* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1982):27-36. See also Bell and Watt, *Introduction to*

The first of these is the story of the *gharānīq*, which many writers have discussed.[299] In essence, the Prophet is reported as having recited surah 53 in Makkah, and when he came to its end he made the *sajdah* of *tilāwah* and in this he was followed by those who were present at the time, among whom were some non-Muslims.[300] A number of the earlier Muslims who had emigrated to Abyssinia are reported to have subsequently returned to Makkah, having heard that the people of Makkah had embraced Islam after following the Prophet in his *sujūd al tilāwah*.[301] So far the reports are accepted, but some narrators link this report with the story of *al ghāranīq*, in which it is said that when the Prophet recited Qur'an 53:10-20, he added to the Qur'an the words: *"Tilka al gharānīq al 'ulā wa inna shafā'atahunna la turtajā"*[302] ("These are the exalted *gharānīq* whose intercession is to be hoped for"), and that Jibrīl came with a revelation to abrogate it immediately. Moreover, certain *mufassirūn* quote the story as an example of Shayṭān interfering in the process of revelation.

The story, however, is fiction, being found no earlier than the time of the Followers and not being attributed in any of its versions (to, say, any one of the Companions), let alone to the Prophet.[303] Hence, al Rāzī asserts that the story was invented by enemies of Islam.[304]

The presence of this story in many books of *tafsīr* is no different from the presence there of what is introduced under the name of *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Al Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ refutes it on two grounds. First, the story is groundless, obscure, contradictory, and is not attributed to anyone among the Companions. Second, the context contradicts the infallibility of the Prophet, for it is impossible for Satan to have any effect on him or that he would wish to praise false gods, intentionally or otherwise, because the Prophet is reported as saying ,"Verily my eyes sleep but my heart does not." Al Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ adds that the story's words differ in style and seem alien to the Qur'an, and that there is no report from the enemies of Islam of different origins that any of them used the story against the Qur'an. Furthermore, no one among the newly converted Muslims reverted from Islam as a result of this story, as happened on the occasion of the *Isrā'*. In addition, Quraysh and Thaqīf had told the Prophet that if he pleased their idols only by looking on them with favor that they would embrace Islam. The Prophet had refused their proposal, which indicates the falsehood of the story of the *gharānīq*.[305]

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the Qur'ān, 88-89; Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 101-09; Lichiten-staedter, "A Note on the Gharānīq and Related Qur'ānic Problems," *Israel Oriental Studies*, no. 5 (1975):54-61; Burton, "Those are the high-flying cranes," JSS, no. 15 (1970):246-65.

300. *Bukhārī*, 6:363; *Tirmidhī*, 3:58.
301. *Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, 3:330-33.
302. Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 17:186-90, 3rd ed., 1388/1968 (unedited version).
303. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:229-231; *Al Shifā'*, 2:289.
304. *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 23:51.
305. *Al Shifā'*, 2:289-97.

According to al Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ, if the story were authentic, the best interpretation for *al gharānīq* would have been the angels, since their intercession could be hoped for. However, when the polytheists attributed the word *gharānīq* to their idols it was abrogated.[306]

Al Rāzī, in refuting the story, points out that it is rejected by the Qur'an, Sunnah, and reason. First, he quotes the following verses of the Qur'an:

> And if the Messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, and We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath). (69:44-46)

> . . . It is not for me of my own accord, to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me: if I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the penalty of a Great Day to come. (10:15)

> Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him. (53:3-4)

> And their purpose was to tempt you away from that which We had revealed unto thee to substitute in Our name something quite different: (In that case), behold! They would certainly have made you (their friend)! And had We not given you strength you would nearly have inclined to them a little. (17:73-74)

> . . . Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow well-arranged stages gradually. (25:32)

> By degrees shall We teach you to declare (The Message), so you will not forget. (87:6)

Second, al Rāzī reports Ibn Khuzaymah (311/923) as having said that the story was fabricated by *Zanādiqah* and that he composed a book on this subject and reports al Bayhaqī as having stated that "this story is groundless in its transmission and the narrators of it are rejected." He also refers to al Bukhārī, who does not mention the story.[307]

Third, al Rāzī argues that to praise idols is *kufr*, which cannot be attributed to the Prophet, who was not able to pray in the Ka'bah until after the

306. *Ibid.*, 302.
307. *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 23:51.

polytheists had left it (because of their hatred for him). He adds that God would have prevented Satan from causing mischief at the outset rather than allowing him to do so and then correcting it, thus allowing for possible confusion. Al Rāzī refutes the possibility that the Prophet could have added or omitted anything from the revelation.[308]

Furthermore, what is meant by the word "*yansakhu*" in Qur'an 22:53 is its linguistic meaning (i.e., *izālah*), rather than the term used in *al nāsikh wa al mansūkh*.[309] In addition, the word "*tamannā*" in this context simply means hope,[310] although it may have another meaning in Arabic, to recite.[311] In fact, Ibn Hishām mentions nothing more than the fact that the *Muhājirūn* came back to Makkah.[312]

Ibn Kathīr objects to the story of the *gharānīq* and confirms that it is not accepted. He states that although it has been narrated in many different weak versions, it is rejected because the weak version is not acceptable no matter how often it is reported.[313]

Muḥammad 'Abduh points out that the word *ghurnūq* or *ghirnīq* (plural *gharānīq*) is not found in any sound report as having been used by the pre-Islamic Arabs in their poems or speeches as a name for their idols. In addition, he studies the meanings of the word lexicographically and concludes that none of them seems to be relevant to the idols.[314]

As regards the second episode of the *gharānīq*, it is maintained that certain scribes of the Prophet would deceive him and alter the text of the Qur'an, changing the ending of the verses, and that the Prophet saw little point in objecting to this. He accepted the alternations on the grounds that it makes no difference whether the phrase is written *Samī'un 'Alīm* or *'Alīmun Samī'*.[315] The story is attributed to 'Abd Allāh Ibn Abī al Sarḥ, who, as a result, is reported to have left Islam and gone back to Makkah and claimed that he wrote what he wanted. In another version, it is said that when the Prophet recited Qur'an 23:12-14 and asked him to write it down, he commented "*fatabāraka Allāhu aḥsanu al khāliqīn*." The Prophet then said, "So it has been revealed," whereupon he reverted and said that it had been revealed to him as much as to the Prophet.[316] He was ordered to be

308. *Ibid.*
309. *Ibid.*, 23:52, 56.
310. *Ibid.*, 23:51; *Tafsīr al Qāsimī*, 12:46-47.
311. *Ibid.*
312. *Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, 3:330-33. However, Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq is reported as having narrated this episode with the addition of *al Gharānīq*. See Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 17:187 (unedited version).
313. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:229-31.
314. *Tafsīr al Qāsimī*, 12:56.
315. *Al Shifā'*, 2:306; al Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ comments that the report is no more than a narration attributed to a nonbeliever whose report is most fit to be rejected.
316. *Qurṭubī*, 7:40.

killed after the conquest of Makkah. However, this report is groundless, since it is not mentioned in the earlier reliable sources. For example, there is no mention of this in the books of *Maghāzī* and *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām. The first reference mentioning this is on the authority of Ibn al Kalbī (146/763) and al Wāqidī (207/822).[317] However, both men are accused liars.[318]

The same thing is attributed to 'Abd Allāh Ibn Abī Khaṭal[319] and to an ex-Christian who also is said to have made alterations and reverted to Christianity. It is also reported that his grave cast him up many times.[320]

The story, however, is groundless and fictitious. It is difficult to believe that the Qur'an, which was memorized by the Prophet and many of his Companions, certain of whom had their own personal manuscripts, should have been altered with or without the Prophet's consent. The Prophet is reported as having corrected al Barā' Ibn 'Āzib when he changed a single word when he read from his memory what he had been taught to say when going to sleep. Thus, it is impossible that the Prophet would have permitted any change in the text of the Qur'an.[321] Furthermore, the ending verses (*al fawāṣil*) play an important role in the beauty of the style of the Qur'an.

In no case do the scribes differ in writing any *fāṣilah*, although they have been reported as having differed in writing the word *al tābūt* (whether to write it with a final *ta'* or *ha'*).

Reliable sources do mention that 'Abd Allāh Ibn Abī al Sarḥ was a Muslim and one of the scribes of the revelation, and that he reverted and fled from Madīnah to his people in Makkah. As a result, when the Prophet conquered Makkah he ordered that Ibn Abī al Sarḥ be killed. However, 'Uthmān interceded and asked the Prophet to accept his repentance, which he did. Even if Ibn Abī al Sarḥ claimed, after leaving Islam, that he made alterations in the Qur'an, this allegation should not be accepted any more than in the case of al Raḥḥāl Ibn 'Unfuwah. The latter was sent on a mission to Banū Ḥanīfah, the people of Musaylimah, but joined Musaylimah. There he told the people that he came with a message that the Prophet agreed to share with Musaylimah, and some followed him.[322] Thus, we cannot accept these allegations.

Also it is difficult to believe that the Prophet was deceived three times, respectively, given his statement: "The believer is not stung twice from the same hole."[323]

317. Al Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, 2:855.
318. Al A'ẓamī, *Kuttāb al Nabiyy*, 89.
319. Ibn Sayyid al Nās, *'Uyūn al Athar*, 2:175-76, 315-16.
320. Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*, 3.
321. *Bukhārī*, 8:216-17.
322. *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, 3:289.
323. *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 2:1318, hadith nos. 3982-83.

In conclusion, we can say that the Qur'an was committed to the hearts of the Companions and recorded by special scribes appointed by the Prophet during his life-time.

Abū Bakr compiled these records in a complete *muṣḥaf,* ordering them by ayah and surah, as he found them in the writings and supported by the memories of *Ḥuffāẓ*. This *muṣḥaf* was kept in his custody and passed to 'Umar, who left it in the custody of his daughter, because he died before the succession of 'Uthmān. When differences arose among the *Qurrā',* 'Uthmān, with the consent of the Companions, had copies from the master copy of Abū Bakr distributed to the *amṣār* along with a *Qāri'* to teach the people. The Qur'an was received and transmitted with *tawātur* generation after generation. Hence, our *muṣḥaf* is a complete record of the Qur'an without alteration, addition, or omission. Obscured, weak, or fabricated reports cannot be accepted in the matter of the Qur'an, which needs *tawātur* for every piece of information concerning its text. Although the abrogation of certain verses during the lifetime of the Prophet does not affect the trustworthiness of the Qur'an, all claimed examples of *mansūkh al tilāwah,* with or without *ḥukm,* which we have studied, are shown to be groundless, as are the two episodes of the *gharānīq* and the accounts of scribes having altered the *fawāṣil* of the Qur'an.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'UTHMĀNIC *MAṢĀḤIF*

The *Maṣāḥif* and Their Relation to the *Aḥruf*

Did the *maṣāḥif* compiled by 'Uthmān include the seven *aḥruf* discussed in the first chapter? Views on this differ according to the various views on the nature of the seven *aḥruf.*

Ibn al Jazarī attributes to a group of scholars the view that the *maṣāḥif* contain the seven *aḥruf.* The scholars argue that the Ummah cannot abandon anything of the *aḥruf,* and that the *maṣāḥif* were copied from the compilation of Abū Bakr.[1] Ibn Ḥazm supports this view, stating that 'Uthmān did not change anything in the Qur'an and could not rescind the permission to recite the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* given to the Muslims to facilitate its reading. He adds that 'Uthmān's aim was to unify Muslims and to provide them with *maṣāḥif* to correct the mistakes of some *Qurrā'* and their personal manuscripts and to make his *maṣāḥif* a reference for all Muslims.[2] Ibn al Bāqillānī supported this view, stating that what 'Uthmān had done was to stop people from reciting the Qur'an in certain unauthentic ways and interpolating explanatory material. He adds that neither 'Uthmān nor any other Muslim leader could make difficult for the Ummah what had previously been made easy for them. Moreover, he says that the people did not differ about famous and authentic *aḥruf,* but only about isolated readings.[3]

Another group of scholars states that 'Uthmān compiled the *maṣāḥif* in only one *ḥarf* and abandoned the rest of the *aḥruf.*[4] Al Ṭabarī argues for this, stating that Muslims were permitted (*rukhṣah*), not obliged to recite

1. *Nashr,* 1:31.
2. *Al Faṣl fī al Milal wa al Niḥal,* 2:77.
3. *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 142. Al Ja'burī adopts this view and regards it as authentic. See his *Kanz al Ma'ānī,* f4.
4. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 1:63-64; *Mushkil al Āthār,* 4:190-91.

the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf.* He adds that when 'Uthmān witnessed the disputes among the Muslims over the *qirā'ah* he decided, with the Ummah's consent, to unify them in one *ḥarf.*[5] Al Ṭaḥāwī supports this view and states that the permission for seven *aḥruf* was needed because Muslims found it difficult to change their habits due to their illiteracy. He adds that when their dialect more closely resembled that of the Prophet and when more people could write, they were commanded by 'Uthmān to read the Qur'an in only one *ḥarf.*[6] Al Qurṭubī attributes this view to Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah, 'Abd Allāh Ibn Wahb, al Ṭabarī, al Ṭaḥawī, Ibn 'Abd al Barr, and many of the scholars.[7]

Finally, the *maṣāḥif* are said to contain as much of the *aḥruf* as can be accommodated within the orthography of the Qur'an, according to the final revealed version[8]—the view attributed to most scholars. Conse-quently, the *maṣāḥif* include an undefined number of *aḥruf,* certainly more than one *ḥarf* but not all seven *aḥruf.*[9] Ibn al Jazarī opts for this view, using the argument of al Ṭabarī.[10] Al 'Asqalānī supports this view, stating that the *maṣāḥif* contain an unspecified number of the seven *aḥruf.* He gives an example from the *maṣāḥif,* in which the word *min* in Qur'an 9:100 exists in the *muṣḥaf* of Makkah, while it is omitted in the *maṣāḥif* of the other cities.[11] Abū Shāmah quotes al Mahdawī as having supported this view, and considers it the sounder one, attributing it to the eminent scholars.[12]

Indeed, this last view seems to be the most likely and acceptable, since indications of more than one *ḥarf* exist in the *maṣāḥif,* as has been pointed out by al 'Asqalānī.[13]

Those who agree that the *maṣāḥif* include only one *ḥarf* or an unspecified number of *aḥruf* differ regarding their abrogation and whether it took place during the Prophet's lifetime, a view attributed to most scholars, or whether it took place later, at the time of the compilation of 'Uthmān, on the grounds that it was not an obligation of Muslims to preserve all seven *aḥruf,* but rather a *rukhṣah* (permission), and that when 'Uthmān witnessed the dispute among the Muslims concerning *qirā'āt,* he removed this permission.[14]

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5. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 1:58-59.
6. *Mushkil al Āthār,* 4:190-91.
7. *Qurṭubī,* 1:42-43.
8. *Nashr,* 1:31; *Itqān,* 1:141-42.
9. *Nashr,* 1:31-32.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 9:30.
12. *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 140-42.
13. *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 9:30.
14. *Sharh al Sunnah,* 4:525-26; *Sharḥ al Zurqanī,* 2:11-12; al Muṭī'ī, *Al Kalimāt al Ḥisān,* 113-14.

However, the existence of all seven *aḥruf* or an unspecified amount of them in the *qirā'āt* does not necessarily mean that they were written down in the *maṣāḥif*. Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib al Qaysī states: "The Qur'an was written in one *ḥarf* to minimize the difference (in readings) among Muslims."[15] This is supported by al Baghawī, who states that this was according to the final revealed version.[16]

Orthography of the *Maṣāḥif*

The *maṣāḥif* contained neither vowels nor diacritic points, and thus in this respect the Arabic orthography resembled the scripts from which it was derived.

Some scholars have maintained that this lack of vocalization and diacritics was intentional, so that either all seven *aḥruf* or some portion of them could be accommodated. Among the scholars who shared this view are al Dānī,[17] Ibn al 'Arabī,[18] Ibn Taymiyya,[19] and Ibn al Jazarī.[20] This view assumes that vocalization and diacritics were known to the Arabs when they wrote the *maṣāḥif*. Indeed, many authorities maintain that the Arabic letters had always possessed these features or at least *i'jām* (dotting).[21] In support of this, we might adduce certain documents that have been dated to the early first century A.H. The first one dates from the reign of 'Umar in 22/643, and in it appear some letters with dotting; i.e., *khā'*, *dhāl*, *zāy*, *shīn*, and *nūn*.[22] The other document is that of al Ṭā'if, which dates from the reign of Mu'āwiyah in 58/677 and in which most letters that require dots are dotted.[23]

The *maṣāḥif* remained unchanged until it was felt necessary to develop their orthography by introducing vocalization to help the readers of the Qur'an read it perfectly and avoid errors in the *i'rāb*, which had been brought about by non-Arabs who had embraced Islām.[24]

15. *Al Ibānah*, 33; *Munjid*, 56.
16. *Sharḥ al Sunnah*, 4:525.
17. *Al Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al Maṣāḥif*, 3.
18. *Al 'Awāṣim min al Qawāṣim*, 2:481.
19. *Fatāwā*, 12:100-2.
20. *Nashr*, 1:32.
21. *Ṣubḥ al A'shā*, 3:151; *Miftāḥ al Sa'ādah*, 2:89; *Kashf al Ẓunūn*, 1:712. Al Dānī in his book *al Muḥkam*, p. 35, mentions the pre-Islamic Aslam Ibn Khudrah as a pioneer of vocalization and diacritics.
22. Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri* (Cairo: 1952), 82, 113-14; al Munajjid, *Tārīkh al Khaṭṭ al 'Arabī*, 37-39, 116, 126; al Jabbūrī, *Aṣl al Khaṭṭ al 'Arabī wa Taṭawwuruhū*, 107.
23. *Early Islamic Inscriptions Near Taif in the Hijaz*, JNES, no. 7 (1948):236-42; al Munajjid, *Tārīkh al Khaṭṭ al 'Arabī*, 101-03.
24. *Al Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al Maṣāḥif*, 3-4, 18-19.

During the reign of Mu'āwiyah, Ziyād, the governor of Baṣrah, is reported to have appointed Abū al Aswad al Du'alī to introduce final vocalization. He was, accordingly, the first scholar to introduce vocalization (*naqṭ al i'rāb*) into the orthography of the *maṣāḥif*.[25]

Some other *riwāyahs* state that Yaḥyā Ibn Ya'mur or Naṣr Ibn 'Āṣim was the first to introduce *naqṭ*.[26]

However, al Qalqashandī states that most scholars agree that Abū al Aswad introduced vocalization,[27] although *naqṭ al i'rāb* of Abū al Aswad al Du'alī consisted merely of the indication of final vowels (*i'rāb*) and *tanwīn*.[28]

The second step in the development of the *maṣāḥif* was the introduction of diacritic points (*naqṭ al i'jām*). This took place during the reign of 'Abd al Malik Ibn Marwān, who is said to have commanded al Ḥajjāj (d. 95 A.H.), the governor of Iraq, to appoint certain scholars to distinguish the letters. Naṣr Ibn 'Āṣim is said to have been appointed to carry out the task. He then was the first to introduce *naqṭ al i'jām*, for the same reason as for the first step, *naqṭ al i'rāb*, which was to facilitate the reading of the *maṣāḥif*.[29] Vocalization and diacritics were the same, consisting of dots that were distinguished by color: red for *naqṭ al i'rāb* and black for *naqt al i'jām*.[30]

Among the scholars, there were many who disliked this idea, as they disapproved of any change or development in the orthography of the *maṣāḥif*[31] and because for them it was easier to read the *maṣāḥif* in their original form, since the actual recitation of the Qur'an depends on the *riwāyah*.[32] Indeed, for a long time the scholars and men of letters considered the use of *naqṭ* in letters an insult.[33]

The third step in the development of the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* was that undertaken by al Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (d. 170/786), who introduced a new system of symbols (*ḥarakāt*) for *i'rāb*. It was not applied immedi-

25. *Ibid.*, 3-4; *Al Aghānī*, 12:298; *Itqān*, 4:160; *Al Awā'il*, 2:129-30; al Anbārī, *Nuzhat al Alibbā'*, 8-11. He adds that the authentic view is that Abū al Aswad was appointed by 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.
26. Al Dānī states that Yaḥyā and Naṣr were probably the first to introduce *naqṭ* to the people and that they had been taught by Abū al Aswad, who started *naqṭ* (*Al Muḥ-kam*, 5-6). Qurṭubī adds the name of al Ḥasan to that of Yaḥyā (*Qurṭubī*, 1:63); Suyūṭī attributes it to all of them (Abū al Aswad, Yaḥyā, and al Ḥassan) adding Naṣr, but considers the attribution to Abū al Aswad the most accepted (*Itqān*, 4:160); *Miftaḥ al Sa'ādah*, 2:24.
27. *Al Muḥkam*, 6.
28. *Subḥ al A'shā*, 3:156.
29. *Al Muḥkam*, 18-19.
30. *Ibid.*, 19-20, 22-23.
31. *Ibid.*, 10-11, where he mentions the names of some eminent scholars such as Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, Qatādah, Ibn Sīrīn, Mālik Ibn Anas, and Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal.
32. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Fatāwā*, 12:100-1.
33. Al Ṣūlī, *Adab al Kuttāb*, 61.

ately to the *maṣāḥif*, for the scribes disliked what they called *naqṭ al shi'r* and were unwilling to use this new system in place of *naqṭ al i'rāb* of Abū al Aswad al Du'alī, which they were used to and regarded as the way of the *salaf*.[34]

The *ḥarakāt* symbols of al Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad eventually dominated and replaced *naqṭ al i'rāb*.[35] In addition, he introduced into his new system of orthography the signs of *hamz, tashdīd, rawm,* and *ishmām*.[36] The consonantal spelling of the Qur'an remained unaltered, because most scholars opposed any change. They argued that the *maṣāḥif* should remain as they have come to us from the Companions and that the orthography is *tawqīf*.[37]

Abū 'Ubayd, Mālik Ibn Anas, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, and al Bayhaqī are reported to have objected to any change in the orthography of the *maṣāḥif*.[38] Al Zamakhsharī supported this view when he stated that "the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* is sunnah and should not be changed."[39]

The Islamic institutions have supported this view to the present day, for the *maṣāḥif* are printed only according to the traditional orthography.[40]

Certain scholars argued, however, that the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* is convention and that people may write their *maṣāḥif* in accordance with the new orthography. Ibn al Bāqillānī is reported to have supported this view, stating that there is no evidence from the Qur'an, the sunnah, consensus, or analogy and that there is no fixed way of writing. Thus, in his view, any orthography that gives the correct reading and is easy to follow is permitted.[41] Ibn Khaldūn supported this view and argued that the art of orthography is merely conventional, that it was not perfect when the *maṣāḥif* were compiled, that there is no sound reason for retaining the old orthography, and that there is no valid argument against writing the *maṣāḥif* according to the new system.[42]

Finally, al 'Izz Ibn 'Abd al Salām maintained that it is not only permitted but necessary (*wājib*) that the *maṣāḥif* should be written according to the new orthography so that uneducated people may not fall into error.[43]

34. *Al Muḥkam*, 22, 43.
35. *Itqān*, 4:162.
36. *Al Muḥkam*, 6.
37. *Ibid.*, 17; *Īqāẓ al A'lām*, passim.
38. *Ibid.*, 11; *Itqān*, 4:146-47; *Miftāḥ al Sa'ādah*, 2:225; *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 1:379-88.
39. *Al Kashshāf*, 3:265.
40. Rūstūfadūnī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān wa al Maṣāḥif*, 12; al Shinqīṭī, *Īqāẓ al A'lām li Wujūb Ittibā' Rasm al Muṣḥaf al Imām*; al Ḥaddād, *Khulāṣat al Nuṣūṣ al Jaliyyah*, 11-16; Makhlūf, *'Unwān al Bayān*, 72-78.
41. *Tafsīr al Marāghī*, 1:13-14.
42. *Al Muqaddimah*, 457.
43. *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 1:379.

Al Zarkashī opted for this view, while adding that the 'Uthmānic orthography also should be preserved and kept as a precious inheritance.[44] Al Marāghī adopted this view and stated that he, for the same reason as that given by al 'Izz Ibn 'Abd al Salām, preferred to write the verses while writing his *tafsīr* according to the new orthography. His reasoning is that at the present time people have more need for it than they did in the time of Ibn 'Abd al Salām.[45]

However, according to the general belief, the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* should not be altered since, as Ibn al Jazarī says, this orthography accommodates the variant readings of the Qur'an in accordance with the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*.[46] Al Dānī states that the differences among *maṣāḥif* in preserving or omitting certain letters and words is because of the need to preserve all the *aḥruf* revealed to the Prophet and received by the Companions.[47]

The most practical way of dealing with this problem may be that adopted in certain *maṣāḥif* intended for learners, in which the words that differ in writing from the contemporary orthography are explained in the margins.[48] This system helps contemporary readers, particularly learners, while preserving the inherited orthography of the *maṣāḥif*.[49]

Ibn Abī Dāwūd attributes to al Ḥajjāj the introduction of certain consonantal and orthographical modifications in eleven places in the Qur'an. According to him they are as follows:

1. 2:259: The word *yatasanna* was changed to *yatasannah.*
2. 5:48: The word *sharī'atan* was changed to *shir'atan.*
3. 10:22: The word *yanshurukum* was changed to *yusayyirukum.*
4. 12:45: The word *'ātīkum* was changed to *'unabbi'ukum.*
5. 23:58-59: The word *lillāh* occurs three times, the last two times being changed to *Allāh.*
6. 26:116: The word *al mukhrajīn* was changed to *al marjūmīn.*
7. 26:167: The word *al marjūmīn* was changed to *al mukhrajīn.*
8. 43:32: The word *ma'ā'ishahum* was changed to *ma'īshatahum.*

44. *Ibid.*
45. *Tafsīr al Marāghī*, 1:15.
46. *Nashr*, 1:12.
47. *Al Muqni'*, 114. Examples will be forthcoming, 91f.
48. This method was adopted recently in 'Abd al Jalīl 'Īsā, *Al Muṣḥaf al Muyassar* and *Muṣḥaf al Shurūq al Mufassar*.
49. Mālik Ibn Anas is reported to have agreed to write *maṣāḥif* for learners in the standard orthography. See al Dānī, *Al Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al Maṣāḥif*, 11.

9. 47:15: The word *yāsin* was changed to *āsin*.
10. 57:7: The word *ittaqaw* was changed to *anfaqū*.
11. 81:24: The word *ẓanīn* was changed to *ḍanīn*.[50]

However, this report of Ibn Abī Dāwūd is not regarded as authentic for several reasons. First, the *isnād* of this *riwāyah* is not sound, since the author cites an unnamed book by his father and two obscure and unacceptable *Ruwāt* in the *isnād*.[51] Second, Ibn Abī Dāwūd is the only source for this information and his scholarship has been discredited by his own father.[52] Third, al Ḥajjāj would have been opposed, in his time or later, if he had made this alleged modification.[53] Fourth, Ibn Abī Dāwūd says—on the same page—of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ziyād that he asked Yazīd al Fārisī to add the letter (*alif*) twice in the middle and at the end of *qālū* and *kānū*. It is said that he thus added two thousand (*alifs*) into the *muṣḥaf*.[54] Al Ḥajjāj objected to this, even though the meaning of the text would not be altered. This fact makes it more unlikely that he himself would have made any innovations. In any case, it is said that Ibn Mas'ūd read *lillāh* in three places in Qur'an 23:58-59, while the people of Iraq read *lillāh* in the first place and *Allāh* in the other two,[55] while again in the *Muṣḥaf al Imām* and the *muṣḥaf* of Baṣrah, *Allāh* occurred on the first two occasions and *lillāh* on the third.[56] Thus all of these variations existed before the time of al Ḥajjāj and therefore he could have no role in any alteration. In fact, references show that all of these spellings given by al Dānī predate al Ḥajjāj. Finally, if al Ḥajjāj's aim was to correct acknowledged errors in the text, we would not expect any of these spellings to be preserved in the accepted readings, as in fact they are.

Some examples are accepted in both forms among the *Qurrā'*, such as the first example, while others are not (as in Qur'an 26:116 and 167 which are not found in any source). However, as regards the orthography of these words, they apparently were not dotted before al Ḥajjāj. Thus, their readings were governed only by *riwāyah*, and what can be attributed to

50. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 49-50, 117-118.
51. Ibid., 117; al 'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al Tahdhīb*, 5:89-115; 8:166-167; al Bukhārī, *Kitāb al Ḍu'afā' al Saghīr*, 76.
52. *Tadhkirat al Ḥuffāẓ*, 2:770-72; *Ṭabaqāt al Ḥuffāẓ*, 75-76.
53. See, for example, *Tārīkh al Ṭabarī*, vol. 6, passim; Ibn Kathīr, *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah*, 9:117-39; *Tārīkh Khalīfah Ibn Khayyāṭ*, part 1, 340-419.
54. *Al Maṣāḥif*, 117. The *isnād* includes Yazīd al Fārisī, who was regarded as weak (chapter 2, page 63). However, according to al Dānī, the omission of *alif* after the *wāw* of plural was consistent, except in a few cases of which he gives examples. *Al Muqni'*, 26-7.
55. *Muqaddimatān*, 119.
56. *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 117-18.

al Ḥajjāj is, in fact, only the introduction of *naqṭ al i'jām* throughout the *maṣāḥif* and not only in these particular examples. The *muṣḥaf* continued to be read according to the *riwāyah*, and the vocalization and dotting were in accordance with this.

Jeffery regards this supposed consonantal and orthographical modification as "an entirely new recension of the Qur'an" and maintains that "this new text promulgated by al Ḥajjāj seems to have undergone more or less extensive alterations."[57] Indeed, he exaggerates the role of al Ḥajjāj as stated in the *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif*[58] to the extent of claiming that "if this is so, our *textus receptus* is not based on the recension of 'Uthmān but on that of al Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf."[59]

However, al Ḥajjāj had done nothing except sanction the diacritic points introduced by scholars whom he had appointed for the purpose.[60] He distributed copies of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* to the metropolitan cities, including Egypt. The governor there, 'Abd al 'Azīz Ibn Marwān, was insulted to receive a *muṣḥaf*, for he felt that he had no need of the work of al Ḥajjāj.[61]

Thus, nothing can be attributed to al Ḥajjāj as regards the *maṣāḥif* apart from the diacritic points, which were introduced by scholars appointed by al Ḥajjāj (who himself was commanded by 'Abd al Malik Ibn Marwān).[62]

The next step, after the introduction of vocalization and diacritic points, was the addition of surah titles with an indication of their beginnings and endings[63] and the place of their revelation,[64] and a sign consisting of three dots at the end of each verse.[65] Furthermore, the verses were divided into portions of *akhmās* (fives) and *ash'ār* (tens),[66] and then the *muṣḥaf* was divided into thirty parts (*ajzā'*), each *juz'* into two divisions (*ḥizb*), and each *ḥizb* into four *arbā'*.[67] In addition, signs were introduced for all the above-mentioned innovations. The signs were introduced in different colors into the *maṣāḥif* in their manuscript forms.

However, these colored signs, which existed as long as the *maṣāḥif* were written by hand, could not continue with the appearance of printed

57. "The Textual History of the Qur'an," *Journal of Middle Eastern Society* (Spring 1947):45.
58. See below.
59. *Ibid.*
60. See page 68 of this chapter.
61. Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa Akhbāruhā*, 117-118.
62. See page 68 of this study.
63. *Al Muḥkam*, 16-17.
64. *Tārīkh al Muṣḥaf al Sharīf*, 78.
65. *Ibid.*, 17.
66. *Ibid.*, 14-15.
67. *Al Burhān*, 1:250; *Tārīkh al Muṣḥaf al Sharīf*, 78.

texts because of the difficulty in dealing with them in the printing press.[68] Moreover, certain additions/signs were introduced in printed *maṣāḥif*, for example, the signs of the six kinds of *awqāf al tilāwah* (pauses) and *sajdat al tilāwah*, which were initiated by the Egyptian editorial committees and followed by other committees of *maṣāḥif*.[69]

The calligraphy of the *maṣāḥif* remained unchanged in the *kūfic* form until the late fourth century A.H.[70] A new development in this field was the introduction of *khaṭṭ al thuluth* and then *naskh*, which eventually dominated.[71] *Khaṭṭ al naskh* is considered the most beautiful one for the *maṣāḥif*. Other kinds, like *ruq'ah, diwānī, fārisī, siyāqah,* and *shikastah,* are unsuitable for the *maṣāḥif*, because the rules dictate that they should not be vocalized, while the *maṣāḥif* should be vocalized to save the reader from committing errors.[72]

The first *muṣḥaf* was printed in Venice in 1530, but it was not distributed because the church authorities had it destroyed immediately.[73] The next printed *muṣḥaf* appeared in 1649 in Hamburg. Another appeared in 1698 in Padua in two large volumes under the supervision of Marracci. The *muṣḥaf* then was published under the supervision of Mawlānā 'Uthmān, in 1787, 1790, and 1798 in St. Petersburgh, and was printed in 1803, 1819, and 1839 in Kazan .[74]

The muṣḥaf was printed lithographically for the first time in Tehran in 1828 and again in Tabriz in 1833.[75]

Thereafter, under the supervision of Flügel, editions of the *muṣḥaf* appeared in 1834, 1842, and 1870 in Leipzig.

It was printed for the first time in India between 1280-81/1863-65 under the supervision of Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Makhdūm and Mawlawī Muḥammad 'Abd al Ḥāfiẓ. It was later revised by Shaykh Mawlawī Maḥbūb 'Alī.

The first Turkish printed edition of the *muṣḥaf* appeared in 1297/1879. This publication was in the calligraphy of Ḥāfiẓ 'Uthmān.[76] The first

68. Introduction to the editorial committee of the *Muṣḥaf al Mālik* annexed to the *Khātimah* of the first edition of 1337 A.H.; *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 129-30.
69. *Ibid.*, *Tārīkh al Muṣḥaf al Sharīf*, 91-94.
70. Al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 160; *Kashf al Ẓunūn*, 1:710-11. Ḥājjī Khalīfah points out (p. 711) that Abū 'Alī Ibn Muqlah (d. 328 A.H.) was the first to introduce *al khaṭṭ al badī'* and that he was followed by 'Alī Ibn Hilāl, who is known as Ibn al Bawwāb (d. 413 A.H.), the best calligrapher of his time. A copy of a *muṣḥaf* written by Ibn al Bawwāb is in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.
71. Al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 410.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Al Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 99.
74. Fandīk, *Kitāb Iktifā' al Qanū' bi mā Huwa Maṭbū'*, 111-12.
75. Al Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 99.
76. Fandīk, *Kitāb Iktifā' al Qanū' bi mā Huwa Maṭbū'*, 112.

muṣḥaf printed in perfect accordance with the 'Uthmānic orthography was published under the supervision of Shaykh Riḍwān Ibn Muḥammad al Mukhallilātī in Egypt in 1308/1886.[77]

Finally, the *muṣḥaf* was printed under the supervision of the *Mashyakhat al Azhar* and the committee appointed by King Fu'ād, and its first edition appeared in 1337/1918. It has been reedited and republished several times since then. This edition is unanimously considered the best edition of the *muṣḥaf*.[78]

However, all the above-mentioned editions were according to the reading of Ḥafṣ from 'Āṣim, which is the common reading throughout the Muslim world. The edition of the *muṣḥaf* according to the reading of Warsh from Nāfi' appeared for the first time in 1349/1930 in Egypt.[79] Various editions of Warsh have been printed in *kūfic* or standard *naskh* in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and, recently, in Libya. This reading is second in common use after Ḥafṣ, and it is the common reading in North and West Africa and in some parts of Sudan and Egypt.

The third most common reading in some parts of North Africa is the reading of Qālūn from Nāfi'. The first printed *muṣḥaf* according to this reading appeared in Tunisia in 1401/1981 and then in Libya.

Finally, the *muṣḥaf* was printed for the first time according to the reading of al Dūrī from Abū 'Amr in Sudan in 1398/1978. This reading is the most common reading in Sudan and it is used in some parts of Egypt and Chad. These four *maṣāḥif* represent the common readings for public purposes in the Islamic world today. However, the remaining canonical readings are known to many readers who have graduated from the institutes of *qirā'āt* of al Azhar and of Sudan and many others.

At the present time, new means of recording have been introduced for Qur'an studies, and all canonical readings of the Qur'an have been recorded orally by famous leading *Qurrā'* in Egypt.[80]

We may say, in concluding this chapter, that the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* include more than one *aḥruf*. The *aḥruf* included in the *maṣāḥif* are those which can be accommodated in the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, which correspond with the final revealed version. The written text has been recorded according to one *ḥarf*, and permission to read the other various readings related only to recitation (provided that it is read as it has been taught). The *maṣāḥif* were not vocalized or dotted; this was

77. *Tārīkh al Muṣḥaf al Sharīf*, 91-92.
78. Al Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 100. The author, however, has wrongly put the date as 1342 A.H. (1923), while it is in fact 1337. See *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 103.
79. *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 103.
80. For more information about this project, see al Sa'īd, *Al Muṣḥaf al Murattal*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: 1978).

introduced in stages, first by Abū al Aswad al Du'alī, who was asked to carry out the task when *laḥn* appeared, and then during the reign of 'Abd al Malik Ibn Marwān, in order to make reading easier. The orthography of the *maṣāḥif* remained unchanged. Printed *maṣāḥif* today represent the four dominant readings of Ḥafṣ, Warsh, Qālūn, and al Dūrī.

Chapter Four

The 'Uthmānic *Maṣāḥif* and the Personal Codices of the Companions and the Successors

Many *qirā'āt* attributed to the Companions differ from the *maṣāḥif* compiled by 'Uthmān and are still to be found in old books of *tafsīr* and *al qirā'āt al shādhdhah* (anomalous readings).[1] These divergent readings are classified below.

Categories of Divergent Readings

Addition and Omission of Certain Surahs

It is related that Ubayy Ibn Ka'b added to his *muṣḥaf* the two surahs of *Qunūt*[2] and that Ibn Mas'ūd omitted from his *muṣḥaf* three surahs: the *Fātiḥah* and the *Mu'awwidhatān* (the two final surahs).[3]

The following views and interpretations have been brought to bear on the discussion of this problem:

1. One group of scholars considers the story untrue and fabricated.[4]
2. Another explanation of this problem is that Ubayy and Ibn Mas'ūd were confused, since they first heard the Prophet recite *qunūt* in the prayers, particularly in the *witr* prayer, the most important sunnah after the obligatory five daily prayers, and that Ubayy came to believe that they were from the Qur'an. Ibn Mas'ūd, on the other hand, thought that the last two surahs of the *muṣḥaf* were not from the

1. See, for example, al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*; al Zamakhsharī, *Al Kashshāf*; Ibn Jinnī, *Al Muḥtasib fī Shawādhdh al Qirā'āt*; Ibn Khālawayh, *Al Mukhtaṣar fī Shawādhdh al Qirā'āt*.
2. *Muqaddimatān*, 75; *Itqān*, 1:182.
3. *Muqaddimatān*, 75; *Itqān*, 1:183.
4. See, for example, Ibn Ḥazm, *Al Fiṣāl Min al Milal wa al Nihal*, 2:77; *Muqaddimat Kitāb al Mabānī*, 75; *Itqān*, 1:220-21.

Qur'an because he saw the Prophet recite them as an incantation for al Ḥasan and al Ḥusayn.[5] However, this interpretation is rejected by certain scholars on various grounds. The author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* states that Ubayy's profound knowledge of the Qur'an would have enabled him to distinguish what is the Qur'an from what is not. This is supported by the fact that the transmission of *qirā'ah* from him to the *A'immah* (leading experts in *qirā'ah*) does not mention that Ubayy taught them *qunūt* as part of the Qur'an.[6] Ibn al Bāqillānī suggests that Ubayy might have written *qunūt* on the back of his *muṣḥaf* as a *du'ā'*, "as we do on our *maṣāḥif*."[7] Moreover, he studies in a special chapter the stylistic differences between the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet.[8] On this basis, he concludes that it is impossible that the Companions could not distinguish between the Qur'an and what is not the Qur'an and that the number of surahs was known to them.[9] Indeed, many authorities confirm that what is attributed to Ubayy is no more than *du'ā,'* and they call it *Du'ā' al Qunūt*.[10]

3. Certain scholars maintain that Ibn Mas'ūd did not write those surahs because they were memorized by all Muslims, even the children. Thus there was no fear that they might be forgotten. Otherwise, as the author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* states, how could Ibn Mas'ūd, with his wide knowledge, not be aware of the most famous, the most widely known, and the easiest surahs of the Qur'an?[11] However, Ibn al Anbārī is reported to have rejected this view on the grounds that Ibn Mas'ūd included in his *muṣḥaf* short surahs like *al Kawthar* (108), *al Naṣr* (110), and *al Ikhlāṣ* (112), which are similar in length to *al Mu'awwidhatān*.[12] However, it is understandable, in his opinion, that Ibn Mas'ūd did not write the *Fātiḥah,* which could not be forgotten, because it is recited in all prayers and *rak'ahs*.[13] This is supported by Ibn Mas'ūd's response when he was asked why he did not write it in his *muṣḥaf*. He answered: "If I had written it, I would have written it with every *sūrah*," meaning—as Ibn al Anbārī interprets this—that a portion of the Qur'an is recited during every *ṣalāt* and that this must be preceded by the *Fātiḥah*.[14]

4. The author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* states that Ibn Mas'ūd may have omitted the surahs because he wanted to write only what he heard direct-

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5. *Qurṭubī*, 1:53, 20:251; *Muqaddimatān*, 75; Ibn al Bāqillānī, *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 291.
6. *Muqaddimatān*, 75.
7. *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 291-92.
8. *Ibid.*, 291-97.
9. *Ibid.*, 292.
10. See, for example, Muqātil, *Tafsīr al Khams Mi'at Āyah*, 5; al Akhfash, *Ma'ānī al Qur'ān*, 2:551.
11. *Muqaddimatān*, 96-97; *Qurṭubī*, 20:251.
12. *Qurṭubī*, 20:251.
13. *Ibid.*, 1:53.
14. *Ibid.*

ly from the Prophet.[15] However, this view seems not to be sound for the reason that Ibn Mas'ūd himself is reported to have said, "I have been taught seventy surahs directly from the mouth of the Prophet . . .,"[16] which indicates that he learned the rest of the surahs from other Companions. Thus, his *muṣḥaf* contains both the surahs he heard from the Prophet and those that he learned from the Companions.

5. Al Qurṭūbī attributes to Yazīd Ibn Hārūn the view that Ibn Mas'ūd died before he had completed memorizing all the surahs. However, al Qurṭūbī objects to this view,[17] which indeed has no evidence to support it. The alleged exclusion of these surahs from the *muṣḥaf* of Ibn Mas'ūd does not mean that they were not memorized by him for, as is well known, they are among the shortest and easiest surahs of the Qur'an.
6. Furthermore, Ibn al Bāqillānī states that all these *riwāyahs* are isolated reports that should not be regarded as reliable. In addition, he considers all differences attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd as false and related by ignorant (people), although he does not deny that Ibn Mas'ūd, like any other *ḥāfiẓ*, might fall into error in certain *ḥurūf*. He adds that if Ibn Mas'ūd had denied these two sealing surahs, the Companions would have disagreed with him, and that this would have become widely known, since lesser quarrels have been reported to us. Also, he says that the consensus of the Companions on the compilation of the *muṣḥaf* cannot be impugned by these anomalous invented narrations.[18]

Finally, a considerable number of *aḥādīth* refer to the position of these surahs,[19] the story behind their revelation,[20] and, above all, to the recitation of them by the Prophet while at home and traveling,[21] which indicate that Ibn Mas'ūd was aware of them. Thus, these narrations attributed to Ubayy Ibn Ka'b and 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd cannot be regarded as authentic.

Interpolation of Explanatory Material

The interpolation of certain explanatory material, consisting of one or more words, into the text of the Qur'an is attributed to the personal codices of some of the Companions. Some examples are listed and discussed as follows:

15. *Muqaddimatān*, 97.
16. Ibn Ḥanbal, *al Musnad*, 5:258-59; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:46-47.
17. *Qurṭubī*, 1:53, 58, 20:251.
18. *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 291-92.
19. See, for example, al Albānī, *Al Aḥādīth al Saḥīḥah*, 2:582-83, hadith no. 891; 249, hadith no. 645; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 2:152-53.
20. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 2:152-53; al Suyūṭī, *Lubāb al Nuqūl fī Asbāb al Nuzūl*, 238-39.
21. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 2:152.

1. Ibn al Zubayr is reported to have added the words ويستعينون بالله على ما أصابهم [22] after كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس تأمرون بالمعروف وتنهون عن المنكر (3:104).

The author of the *Kitāb al Mabānī* says that this addition, if it is accepted as authentic, is certainly a gloss by Ibn al Zubayr and his own words, and that some narrators were confused and incorporated it into the text. He supports this assertion by stating that these same words were attributed to 'Uthmān himself, which suggests that he recited them in his preaching as an explanation only and not as part of the Qur'an (since otherwise he would have added them to his own *Muṣḥaf al Imām*).[23]

2. Ibn Abbas is reported to have added the words من نفسي after إنّ الساعة آتية أكاد أخفيها (20:15).[24] This is also attributed to Ubayy Ibn Ka'b with the further words من نفسي فكيف أطلعكم عليها [25]

The author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* states that if the addition is regarded as authentic, it is an explanatory addition to the text and that certain narrators were confused and incorporated them into the text. Fur-thermore, the *isnād* of the *riwāyah* to Ubayy is *maqṭū'* (interrupted), and the transmission of the *qirā'ah* from Ubayy to Abū 'Amr and Ibn Kathīr invalidates it.[26]

3. 'Alī is reported to have added the words ونوائب الدهر immediately after والعصر (103:1).[27]

The author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* argues that this attribution to 'Alī is invalid, first, on the ground that the *qirā'ah* of Abū 'Abd al Raḥmān al Sulamī (the transmitter of the *qirā'ah* from 'Alī, his close student, and teacher of al Ḥasan and al Ḥusayn), corresponds to *Muṣḥaf al Imām,* in which there is no mention of this addition. Second, if the attribution to 'Alī were authentic, he would have incorporated it into the text and would not have abandoned these words, the result of which would have been to decrease the reward of the reciter and alter a meaning desired by Allah. This, therefore, suggests that the narrator either lied or forgot. Third, we must take into account the unanimous agreement of the Muslims on *Mushaf al Imām,* so that if anyone alleges any single addition or omission that contradicts the consensus, it is no different from claiming that the obligatory

22. *Al Maṣāḥif,* 82-82; *Muqaddimatān,* 102; *Materials,* 227.
23. *Materials,* 227.
24. *Ibid.,* 201.
25. *Ibid.,* 146.
26. *Muqaddimatān,* 102.
27. *Materials,* 193.

prayers are fifty, that marrying nine wives is allowed, or that fasting more than the month of Ramaḍān is a duty.[28]

4. Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ is reported to have added the two words من أم after وله أخ أو أخت (4:12).[29]

This addition, as al Suyūṭī points out, is regarded as *tafsīr*.[30] However, it is unanimously agreed that this *tafsīr* is correct.[31]

5. Ubayy Ibn Ka'b is reported to have added the sentence ولو حميتم كما حموا لفسد المسجد الحرام to إذ جعل الذين كفروا في قلوبهم الحمية حمية الجاهلية (48:26).[32]

'Umar objected to this reading of Ubayy and asked Zayd to read it. He read it according to the general reading, after which he agreed with Zayd. It is also reported that Ubayy defended his reading and that 'Umar agreed to let him read it accordingly.[33] The author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* questions this report as one that cannot be reconciled with the Book received by the Prophet, which was preserved and transmitted from him. In addition, Ubayy might have reported that reading before its abrogation, particularly before the final revealed version. This is supported by the transmission of a *qirā'ah* from Ubayy to Abū Ja'far, Ibn Kathīr, and Abū 'Amr, who transmitted from Ubayy the ways of reading in *madd* (prolongation) and *shadd* (doubling), but did not report this addition. Furthermore, he points out, this addition differs from the Qur'an stylistically. Finally, he asks how it could be that 'Umar was not aware of this addition, since he heard this surah directly from the Prophet on the occasion of Ḥudaybiyyah.[34]

6. 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have added the word متتابعات to فصيام ثلاثة أيام (5:91).[35]

Discussing this example, al Ghazzālī argues that these readings differ from the *muṣḥaf* and are to be attributed to the Companions. They are not part of the Qur'an, because the Qur'an is not substantiated except by *tawātur*. He attributes the above reading to Ibn Mas'ūd and regards it as not *mutawātir*, and therefore as not from the Qur'an. Consequently, it

28. *Muqaddimatān*, 103-04.
29. *Itqān*, 1:216.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Nashr*, 1:28.
32. Al Ḥākim, *Al Mustadrak 'alā al Ṣaḥīḥayn*, 2:225-26.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Muqaddimatān*, 91-93.
35. *Qurṭubī*, 2:283.

should be considered as his interpretation of the verse and his *madhhab*. He quotes Abū Ḥanīfah as having adopted this interpretation as *wājib* (obligation). Although Abū Ḥanīfah did not accept this addition as part of the Qur'an, he accepted it as an isolated report that, in his view, was sufficient evidence for practice. Nevertheless, al Ghazzali objects to Abū Ḥanīfah's view and concludes that this addition is not even acceptable as an isolated report for practice, because it has not been reported to us as a sunnah heard from the Prophet.[36]

7. Among the successors, al Ḥasan al Baṣrī is reported to have added the words الورود الدُّخول to وإن منكم إلا واردها (19:71).[37]

Al Suyūṭī quotes Ibn al Anbārī as having said that this addition is al Hasan's own interpretation of the meaning of the word الوُرود, but that some narrators mistakenly incorporated it into the text.[38] Concerning this general problem of the interpolation of explanatory material, Ibn al Jazarī points out that the Companions may have written interpretations in their readings, although they were sure of what they had been taught as the Qur'an. In addition, he states that it is not true that the Companions allowed reading of the Qur'an by meaning as opposed to the literal text.[39] Finally, Abū Ḥayyān maintains that most readings attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd are suspected of being Shī'ah inventions.[40]

Word Order Differences

For example, Abū Bakr is reported to have read وجاءت سكرة الحق بالموت while the words in the *muṣḥaf* are وجاءت سكرة الموت بالحق (50:19).[41] Although certain scholars quoted it as an example of one of the seven *aḥruf*,[42] 'Ā'ishah reported that she heard her father Abū Bakr in his final illness reciting this verse in the same way as it occurs in the *muṣḥaf*.[43] Another example of this is what is attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, namely, that he read إذا جاء فتح الله والنصر, while in the *muṣḥaf* it is found as إذا جاء نصر الله والفتح (90:1).[44] However, Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have interpreted this surah and read it in accordance with the *muṣḥaf*.[45]

36. *Al Mustaṣfā*, 1:102.
37. *Itqān*, 1:216.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Nashr*, 1:321-30; *Munjid*, 17-18. For more discussion, see Chapter 7.
40. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 1:161.
41. *Nashr*, 1:26-27.
42. See Chapter 1, 15-16.
43. *Qurṭubī*, 17:12-13.
44. *Materials*, 208.
45. *Qurṭubī*, 20:232.

Changes in the Consonantal Outlines of Words Without Changing Their Meaning

For example, Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have read the word صيحة (36:29) as زقية, this being quoted by certain scholars as an example of one of the seven *aḥruf*.[46] However, in these scholars' view this reading was eventually disallowed because of the abrogation of certain *aḥruf*.[47]

'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have read the word كالعهن (101:4) as كالصُّوف.[48] 'Umar is also reported to have read the word فامضوا (62:9) as فاسعوا,[49] and Ubayy is reported to have read *lilladhīna āmanū anẓurūnā* (57:13) as للذين آمنوا امهلونا،... أخِّرونا،... ارقْبونا.[50] These reports were quoted by certain scholars as examples of an a *ḥarf* that was abrogated.[51]

Changes in the Consonantal Outline and Meaning of Words

For example, 'Alī is reported to have read the word وَطلح of (56:29) as وَطلع.[52] This was quoted by certain scholars as an example of one of the seven *aḥruf* which was abrogated.[53]

In all of these cases, as we have seen in Chapter 3, it is arguable whether a certain *ḥarf* was abrogated during the lifetime of the Prophet or whether the permission to read in this way was removed when 'Uthmān issued his *maṣāḥif*.[54] Also, these synonyms may be fictitious. Whatever the case, the reading was not left to individual choice but was subject to the *riwāyah*.

As regards the additional interpretations that were attributed to the personal codices, Goldziher expressed doubts about their being part of the original text. He maintained that it is not known yet whether they were original and that they were allowed into the text only as interpretations.[55] On the same page, however, he contradicts himself when he mentions that certain later scholars considered these additional interpretations as part of the text. Goldziher supports this view by arguing that the Companions were reported as having permitted the writing of this kind of additional interpretation in the *muṣḥaf* provided that they did not regard them as

46. *Materials*, 78.
47. See Chapter 1, 12-13, 15-16.
48. *Materials*, 111.
49. *Ibid.*, 221.
50. *Ibid.*, 169.
51. See Chapter 1, 12-13, 15-16.
52. *Materials*, 191.
53. See Chapter 1, 12-13, 15-16.
54. See pp. 66-67 of this book.
55. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 21.

Qur'an.[56] However, the additional interpretations are not part of the original text of the Qur'an and are not to be confused with the *muṣḥaf*, since it was stated clearly that the condition for using them was only as *tafsīr* and not as Qur'an.[57]

One hundred and twenty-three differences have been claimed between the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and all personal codices of the Companions. In nine places, two, three, or four personal codices agree with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, but this is the maximum extent of agreement among them. Furthermore, Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have been the sole reference for 102 out of the total number.[58]

It is argued that the Qur'an contains over 77,000 words and, therefore, the number of words in the personal codices that differed from the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* is thus very small.[59] In this connection, al Jāḥiẓ is quoted as having said the following:

> Verily there are certain people who cast doubt on the trustworthiness of the Qur'an and search for an addition or omission in it without the consent of the Prophet and consensus of the Com-panions. However, if someone had inserted a poetic verse in the poetry of Abū al Shamaqmaq, he would have been notorious among the *Ruwāt*, so how about the Book of Allāh Almighty, which is transmitted in *tawātur* and sound chains and is recited day and night?[60]

Differences Between the *Maṣāḥif* of the *Amṣār*

The *maṣāḥif* that 'Uthmān sent to the major cities are reported to have differed in certain *aḥruf* regarding the addition or omission of certain letters or particles. In this respect, it is said that the *muṣḥaf* of Kūfah differs from that of Baṣrah in five *aḥruf*. For example, in 21:4 we find قال written in the Kūfic *muṣḥaf*, while in the Baṣran we find قُل. Also, the Madīnan *muṣḥaf* is reported to have differed from those of Iraq in twelve *aḥruf*. For example, in 2:132 in the Madīnan *muṣḥaf* we find وأوصى, while in the Iraqi we find ووَصَّى.

Finally, the *maṣāḥif* of Syria and Iraq are said to have differed in forty *aḥruf*. For example, in 5:54 we find يَرْتَدْدْ , while in the latter we find يَرْتَدَّ .[61] However, all are differences in letters between the *maṣāḥif*,

56. *Ibid.*
57. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 185.
58. *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 147.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Muqaddimatān*, 117-21; *Al Muqni'*, 108-24.

except for two examples, which differ in particles. The first one is in 9:100, where the word مِن is found in the *muṣḥaf* of Makkah but is omitted in the other *maṣāḥif*.[62] The second example is in 7:23, where the word هو is omitted from the *maṣāḥif* of Madīnah and Shām, although it exists in the *maṣāḥif* of other cities.[63] The differences of letters can be classified into various categories as follows:

1. Morphological change—in 2:132: وأوصى and وَوَصّى; يَرْتَدِدْ and يَرْتَدَّ in 5:54.
2. Replacement of conjunction—in 91:15: فَلاَ يَخَافُ and وَلاَ يَخَافُ ; and in 40:26 أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ and وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ .
3. Omission of conjunction—in 5:53: يَقُولُ الذِينَ آمنوا and وَيَقُولُ.
4. Consonantal differences—in 10:22: يَنْشُرُكُم and يُسَيِّرُكُمْ .
5. Omission of pronoun suffixes—in 36:35: وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ and وَمَا عَمِلَتْ.
6. Grammatical change—in 55:78: ذُو الْجَلَالِ and ذَا الجَلَالِ .
7. Singular and dual alternation—in 43:38: حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَانَا and جَاءَنَا .
8. Singular and plural alternation—in 10:33: حَقَّتْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ and كَلِمَةُ.
9. Verbal change—in 18:93: قَالَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي and قُلْ .

Al Dānı maintains that all of the above-mentioned differences between the *maṣāḥif* are correct and authentic, for they have been revealed and heard from the Prophet. He adds that when 'Uthmān compiled the *maṣāḥif*, it was not possible to accommodate all these readings in one *muṣḥaf*, and so he distributed them in the *maṣāḥif*.[64]

Moreover, the author of *Kitāb al Mabānī* has studied all examples linguistically and concludes that they are correct and sound. In addition, he states that the differences were intentional to substantiate all *aḥruf* revealed and heard from the Prophet.[65]

Thus, research confirms that the personal codices attributed to certain Companions and their Followers have been transmitted in unauthentic chains, differ from each other, and contradict the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. Additional interpolations are no more than explanatory material that they added to the Qur'anic text as their own personal codices and because they were sure of not confusing them with the original text. The reports that

62. *Al Muqni'*, 11; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:30.
63. *Al Muqni'*, 115.
64. *Ibid.*, 123.
65. *Muqaddimatān*, 121-33.

'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd omitted from his *muṣḥaf* the first and the last two surahs and that Ubayy Ibn Ka'b wrote in his *muṣḥaf al Qunūt* as a surah are groundless.

Finally, the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* are reported to have differed in certain letters or particles, consisting of the addition or omission of letters, except in two places where *huwa* and *min* are sometimes included and sometimes omitted. These accounts are all authentic in their transmission, and it has been proved linguistically that all are acceptable and fluent Arabic in the Arabic version of the Qur'an.

CHAPTER 5

THE LANGUAGE OF THE QUR'AN

This chapter discusses what type of Arabic the Qur'anic text, with its variant readings, represents. Rather than undertake a thorough grammatical and lexicographical analysis of the Qur'an, the purpose here is to examine the information provided by classical Arab scholars as well as the theories of modern scholars. The goal is to determine whether the language of the Qur'an represents Qurayshī Arabic (whatever may be understood by this term), whether it is in standard Arabic or poetic koine but reflecting Ḥijāzī features, or whether it contains a number of fluent dialects in addition to that of Quraysh. Although the available data are not sufficient to allow more than a tentative conclusion, the discussion will provide a better understanding of the problem of the seven *aḥruf*.

The Qur'an refers to the language in which it has been revealed as Arabic, without reference to a particular dialect of the Arabic language. A considerable number of verses support this fact. The following are a few examples:

1. "We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that ye may learn wisdom." (12:2)
2. "Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: the spirit of Faith and Truth came down with it to your heart and mind, that you may admonish in clear Arabic language." (26:192-95)
3. "[It is] a Qur'an in Arabic without any crookedness [therein] in order that they may guard against evil." (39:28)
4. "A book whereof the verses are explained in detail—a Qur'an in Arabic for people who understand." (41:3)
5. "We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic that you may be able to understand and learn wisdom." (43:3)

Ibn al Anbārī (328/939) states that the Qur'an has been revealed in the most eloquent, purest, and clearest language of the Arabs, since Qur'an

4:3 says: "We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic that ye may be able to understand [and learn wisdom]." Also in 41:44 Allah says: "Had we sent this as a Qur'an [in a language] other than Arabic, they would have said: 'Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! [A Book] not in Arabic and [a Messenger] an Arab?' Say: 'It is a guide and healing to those who believe.'"[1] The Qur'an includes no reference to any particular dialect; however, in the sunnah there are a few statements attributed to certain Companions that refer to the issue of dialect. They include the following:

1. 'Uthmān is reported to have commanded the committee appointed by him to compile the Qur'an, all of whom were Qurayshī except Zayd Ibn Thābit, saying: "If you disagree with Zayd Ibn Thābit on any point in the Qur'an, write it in the dialect of Quraysh, as the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue."[2] He is also reported to have made the same statement when the scribes differed in writing the word *al Tābūt* التابوت, as to whether to write it with final *hā'* or *tā'* (eventually it was written with *tā'* according to the dialect of Quraysh).[3]
2. 'Umar is reported to have written to Ibn Mas'ūd that the Qur'an had been revealed in the Qurayshī tongue and that he should teach people accordingly, and not according to the language of Hudhayl.[4] It is reported elsewhere that 'Umar said that the scribes of the *maṣāḥif* should be only from Quraysh and Thaqīf.[5]
3. 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have preferred the scribes of the *maṣāḥif* to be from Muḍar.[6]

Most scholars of the classical period agree that the Qur'an has been revealed in the dialect (*lughah*) of Quraysh, a view shared by most contemporary scholars. However, what is meant by the term *lughah* is not always clear. Does this refer to an actual dialect in the full sense of the term, or to a Qurayshī version of a standard literary language, which exhibits certain Qurayshī features in terms of phonology, morphology and vocabulary? Some scholars have claimed that classical Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) is identical to Qurayshī speech.

The ancient scholars used the term *lughah* in different contexts to mean *lahjah* (dialect), as Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā' did when he distinguished between *lughah* and *'arabiyyah* (the latter is what agreed with the majority, while he called what did not agree with them *lughāt).*[7] In this connec-

1. *Īḍāḥ al Waqf wa al Ibtidā'*, 1:12.
2. *Bukhārī*, 6:479; *Al Murshid al Wājiz*, 92.
3. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:20; *Kitāb al Zīnah*, 1:141.
4. *Īḍāḥ al Waqf wa al Ibtidā'*, 1:13; *Al Muḥtasib*, 1:343; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:27.
5. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 310; *Al Ṣāḥibī*, 28; *Al Muzhir*, 1:211.
6. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 310.
7. Al Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al Naḥwiyyīn wa al Lughawiyyīn*, 34.

tion, al Farrā' says about the two ways of pronouncing أسوة *iswah* or *uswah*, "*wa humā lughatān,*" (they are no more than dialects).[8] The ancient scholars also used the word *lisān* (tongue) to mean *lughah,* which may be interpreted as *lahjah* (dialect), and they interpreted the word *laḥn* to mean *lughah* (*lahjah*).[9] Sībawayh, however, used the word *lughah* to mean an acceptable form of *'arabiyyah.* For example, he says: "*Lughah li ahl al Ḥijāz wa hiya 'arabiyyah jā'izah*"[10] ("[It is] the *lughah* of the people of Hijaz and it is permissible Arabic.") and "*Wa hiya al lughah al 'arabiyyah al qadīmah al jayyidah*" ("It is good, ancient Arabic *lughah.*").[11]

According to the *Ruwāt,* the word *lughāt* means exceptional and rare forms, and differences in the word as to its meaning, morphology, and grammar.[12]

Modern Arab scholars, explain what is meant by *lughah* and *lahjah* more carefully. Al Ghamrāwī states that the dominant view among the philologists is that *lughat Quraysh* represents no more than a dialect of a common language, which is the existing Arabic language.[13] Ḥammūdah, in his *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt,*[14] studies both terms using modern linguistic methodology. According to him, *lahjah* refers to pronunciation and phonetics.[15] This is mainly a matter of accent, although minor variations in word forms or meaning are also encompassed in this term. For the purpose of the following discussion, the term *lughah* will be regarded as meaning a form that is acceptable Arabic but not used by the majority. An important point is that the concept of dialect, as it exists today, was not recognized by early Arabic writers and that attempts (such as that of Rabin)[16] to reconstruct dialects are obscurist and likely to produce scant results.

By examining the views of the scholars, this chapter will reach some conclusions on this question.

The view that the Qur'an has been revealed in the *lughah* (dialect) of Quraysh is based on the following arguments:

1. The first people addressed by the Qur'an were those of Quraysh, who easily understood the language of the Qur'an.

8. Al Farrā', *Ma'ānī al Qur'ān,* 2:339.
9. Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif,* 32.
10. *Al Kitāb,* 2:416.
11. *Ibid.,* 424.
12. Al Rāfi'ī, *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab,* 1:135.
13. *Al Naqd al Taḥlīlī,* 210.
14. 1st ed. (Cairo: 1368/1948).
15. *Ibid.,* 4-5.
16. *Ancient West Arabian.*

In this connection, certain verses are quoted and interpreted in favor of Quraysh: "We have sent not an apostle except [to teach] in the language of his [own] people to make [things] clear to them," (14:4), and also: "And admonish thy nearest kinsmen."[17] (26:214)

2. The Prophet himself was a Qurayshī and his sayings, accordingly, correspond with the language of the Qur'an.[18]
3. The style of the sayings attributed to the Companions and the people of their time belonging to Quraysh is said to have agreed with the language of the Qur'an.[19]
4. In addition, the consensus of all Arabs after Islam and the agreement among the scholars, narrators, *Muḥaddithūn,* and *Mufassirūn* is that the Qur'an has been revealed in the Qurayshī dialect and that, despite the quarrels and political disputes among the tribes and the existence of chauvinism on the part of Ḥimyar and the non-Arabs, no objection to this dialect was ever raised.[20]

The reason the language of the Quraysh has this superior position is as follows:

1. The language is of high quality and fluency.

In this connection, the Prophet is reported to have said that "I am the most eloquent of you because I belong to Quraysh and was brought up in Sa'd Ibn Bakr (the tribe of Ḥalīmah, Muhammad's wetnurse)."[21] Qatādah wrote that Quraysh chose the best of the Arabic language, so that their tongue became the best of all, and that, accordingly, the Qur'an has been revealed in the Qurayshī tongue.[22] Also, al Fārābī is reported to have said that Quraysh were the best among the Arabs in choosing the most eloquent utterances: the easiest to pronounce and hear and the clearest in expression.[23]

This superior Arabic language is said to have been acquired by Quraysh as a result of their communication with other tribes in the course of their conflicts and cultural gatherings at 'Ukāẓ and other markets. Also, the Arabs regularly visited Makkah for religious purposes and trade.[24] Ibn

17. *Mushkil al Āthār,* 4:185; *Itqān,* 1:135.
18. *Fī al Adab al Jāhilī,* 110.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.,* 110-11.
21. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān,* 309; Ibn al Bāqillānī, *Nukat al Intiṣār,* 386; *Al Muzhir,* 1:210.
22. *Lisān al 'Arab,* 1:588.
23. *Al Muzhir,* 1:211; *Al Iqtirāḥ,* 22.
24. *Al 'Aṣr al Jāhilī,* 133; *Fī 'Ilm al Lughah al 'Amm,* 222; al Rāfi'ī, *Tārīkh Adāb al 'Arab,* 1:85-90 (2nd ed., 1940).

Fāris states in his *Al Ṣāḥibī* that delegations on pilgrimages and for other purposes visited Makkah and that they would ask Quraysh to arbitrate between them because of their eloquence and perfect language. Hence, Quraysh used to chose the best of other tribes' speech patterns and poems and add them to their tongue. By doing so and by enhancing their innate ability, they became the most eloquent of the Arabs.[25]

2. The second reason given for Quraysh having this position is that they were far away from neighboring non-Arab states.

This distance, as Ibn Khaldūn puts it, protected Quraysh from non-Arab influences. According to philologists holding this view, the acceptability of the dialects of the Arabs was in proportion to their proximity to Quraysh.[26] Al Suyūṭī quotes al Fārābī as having pointed out that the philologists ignored the Arab tribes that lived near foreign nations.[27]

3. Third, Quraysh were immune to pronunciation defects attributed to other dialects.

Many defects are attributed to certain tribes. For example, Abū al 'Abbās states in his *Majālis Tha'lab*[28] that Quraysh have a high standard of fluency so that they did not have the *'an'anan* of Tamīm, the *kashkashah* of Rabī'ah, the *kaskasah* of Hawāzin, the *taḍajju'* of Qays, the *'ajrafiyyah* of Ḍabbah, and the *taltalah* of Bahrā'. He gives only examples for *'an'anah* and *taltalah*. The first example (*'an'anah*) is the changing of *alif* to *'ayn*, as if to say *'anna 'abda Allāhi qā'imun* for *anna*, while the second (*taltalah*) is the pronunciation of the present-tense prefixes with *kasrah* (as in *ti'lamūna, ti'qilūna,* and *tisma'ūna).*[29]

Other sources cited pronunciation defects in various dialects, among them the *faḥfaḥah* of Hudhayl, which is the change of *ḥā'* to *'ayn;* and the *wakm* and *wahm* of Kalb, which means that the plural siffix *-kum* becomes *-kim* when the preceding vowel is *kasrah.* (Thus they say *'alaykim* and *bikim.*) *Wahm* is the pronunciation of *-hum* as *-him* in such contexts as *minhim, 'anhim,* and *baynihim* in all cases. The *'aj'ajah* of Qudaah consists of changing the final *-ī* to *-ij,* as in substitution *tamīmīj* for *tamīmī.* The *istinṭā'* of Sa'd Ibn Bakr, Hudhayl, al Azd, Qays, and the *Anṣār* is the changing of *'ayn* to *nūn* in the word *anṭā* for *a'ṭā*. *Watm* in the language of Yemen is the pronunciation of *sīn* as *tā';* for example, *al nāt* for *al nās.* The *lakhlakhāniyyah* of Shihr and Oman is saying *masha Allah* for

25. *Al Ṣāḥibī*, 33-34.
26. *Al Muqaddimah*, 635.
27. *Al Muzhir*, 1:212; *Al Iqtirāḥ*, 23.
28. Edited by 'Abd al Salām Hārūn, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dār al Ma'ārif, 1969).
29. *Ibid.*, 1:81.

māshā'a Allāh. The *tumṭumāniyyah* of Ḥimyar is the use of the definite article *-am* instead of *-al,* as in *ṭāba am hawā'u* for *ṭāba al hawā'u.*[30] Some of these features still exist in parts of the former Arabia. One example is the *kashkashah* (i.e., the pronunciation of the feminine suffix *-ik* as *-ish),* because in Ṣan'ā' and other parts of Yemen it is still in use.[31] Another is the *ṭumṭumānnyyah,* which is said to still be in use in Ḥāshid, Arḥab, Khalwān, and other parts of Yemen. One hadith is quoted as using *-am* (i.e., *"Laysa min am birri im siyāmu fi im safar"*).[32]

The following factors contributed to the superior features of the Qurayshī language:

1. The Arabs made pilgrimages to Makkah where Quraysh were the servants of the House and the pilgrims and had custody of the Ka'bah. Hence, Quraysh were favored and respected by all Arab tribes.[33]
2. Quraysh were tradesmen and merchants who traveled to different parts of Arabia, to Syria in the north, and to Yemen in the south. Makkah itself was the commercial center of Arabia. The Qur'an mentions this in surah 106: "For the covenants of security and safeguard (enjoyed) by the Quraysh. Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer."[34]
3. Subsequently, Quraysh acquired political power and authority among other Arab tribes.[35] Abū Bakr is reported to have addressed the *Anṣār* in the following words: "The Arabs only follow Quraysh."[36]

Some modern scholars believe that the richness and purity of the Qurayshī language and the political prestige of Quraysh led to Qurayshī Arabic becoming accepted at an early date as the literary standard throughout Arabia.[37]

Supposedly, Qurayshī Arabic was dominant a long time before Islam, and became the language of culture for all Arabs more than 100 or 150 years before the Hijrah[38] (i.e., from about 500 C.E.). Hence, the Qur'an was understood by the Arabs irrespective of their different tribes.[39]

Al Rāfi'ī asserts that the Arabic language has passed through three stages in its development toward fluency. In its first stage, it was developed

30. *Al Muzhir,* 1:221-23.
31. *Lahajāt al Yaman Qadīman wa Ḥadīthan,* 47-48.
32. *Ibid.,* 20.
33. *Al Ṣāḥibī,* 33; al Rāfi'ī, *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab,* 1:85 (2nd ed., 1940).
34. Wāfī, *Fiqh al Lughah,* 109; *Fī al Adab al Jāhilī,* 111-12.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Al Bayān wa al Tabyīn,* 4:10.
37. Wāfī, *Fiqh al Lughah,* 109-10.
38. *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab,* 1:86.
39. Ḥasan 'Awn, *Dirāsāt fī-al Lughah wa al Naḥw,* 58.

by a single tribe. Then its development was taken up by all the tribes collectively. Finally, Quraysh alone is to be credited with having brought the language to its final and most important stage of development. He argues that Quraysh acquired this position because its members lived in the vicinity of the Ka'bah and met pilgrims, as a result of which they heard others and selected the best of other tongues. Al Rāfi'ī concludes that it was almost miraculous that this development started 100 or 150 years before the Hijrah.[40]

However, certain scholars object to the view that the Qur'an has been revealed only in the *lughah* of Quraysh. They believe that much evidence shows features of various other dialects in the Qur'an. For instance, certain Companions among Quraysh are reported not to have known the exact meaning of some Qur'anic words. Thus 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said: "I did not to know the meaning of [the word *fāṭir* in] *fāṭir al samāwāt* until I met two bedouin quarreling over a well. One of them said, '*Anā faṭartuhā*' (I began [or started] it)."[41] Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said, "I did not to know the meaning of *al fattāḥ* until I heard the daughter of Dhū Yazin saying to an opponent of hers '*halumma fātiḥnī*' (come to arbitration with me). Then I knew it."[42]

Abū Bakr and 'Umar both are reported not to have known the meaning of the word *abb* in 80:31, "*wa fākihatan wa abban.*"[43] In reference to this, a number of books and treatises were composed by early scholars, among which are *Kitāb al Lughāt fī al Qur'an* (being the version of Ibn Ḥasnūn on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās)[44] and *Mā Warad fī al Qur'ān min Lughāt al Qabā'il* (by Abū 'Ubayd al Qāsim Ibn Sallām).[45] In addition, al Nadīm states that al Farrā', Abū Zayd, al Aṣma'ī, al Haytham Ibn 'Adī, Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā al Qaṭī'ī, and Ibn Durayd composed books on *lughāt al Qur'ān.*[46] Al Dāwūdī, in his *Ṭabaqāt al Mufassirīn,*[47] mentions that Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd al Baṣrī has a book on *lughāt al Qur'ān.*[48] This subject has been treated by al Zarkashī and al Suyūṭī, each of whom devotes a chapter to it.[49] Al Suyūṭī's chapter is based on the work of Abū 'Ubayd. Furthermore, many more examples show the existence of grammatical features belonging to other dialects in the Qur'an, such as what is called *lughat akalūnī al barā-*

40. *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab* (Cairo), 1:79-86, 89-90.
41. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 314; *Itqān*, 2:4.
42. Al Mubarrid, *Al Fāḍil*, 113-14; *Itqān*, 2:5.
43. *Itqān*, 2:4.
44. Edited by Ṣalāḥ al Dīn al Munajjid, 2nd ed., Beirut.
45. Published with *Tafsīr al Jalālayn* (Cairo: 1342 A.H.).
46. *Al Fihrist*, 38.
47. Edited by 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar, 1st ed., Cairo, 1392/1972, 2 vols.
48. *Ibid.*, 2:267.
49. *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān*, 1:291-96; *Itqān*, 2:89-120.

ghīth; for example, in 21:3, "*Wa asarrū al najwā al ladhīn ẓalamū,*" and in 5:71, "*Thumma 'amū wa ṣammū kathīrun minhum.*" This ancient Semitic feature is found in the language of other Arab tribes, but the Qurayshī language was free of it.[50] Ibn al Bāqillānī interprets the statement of 'Uthmān about the revelation of the Qur'an in the dialect of Quraysh as meaning that it was mainly but not entirely in this dialect. He cites the fact that features of other dialects exist in the Qur'an and that 43:3, "We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic," refers to all Arabs. In addition, he states that whoever maintains that the Qur'an has been revealed in a particular dialect should provide supporting evidence. He argues that if this were so other people would have said that it should be the tongue of Hāshim, since they are the nearest kinsmen of the Prophet.[51]

Ibn al Bāqillānī quotes the statement attributed to the Prophet, "I am the most eloquent of you because I belong to Quraysh and was brought up in Sa'd Ibn Bakr." He comments that that does not mean that the Qur'an has been revealed in the Qurayshī language, because the Qur'an could be revealed according to the most eloquent language of the Arabs and, according to the language of those whose language is lesser in eloquence, because all varieties of Arabic used in the Qur'an are eloquent. He accepts that most of the language of the Qur'an is Qurayshī, but states that of the different tribes that recited the Qur'an before the Prophet, the Banū Tamīm were the most fluent and clear. This statement of Ibn al Bāqillānī also asserts that the Prophet accepted the *lughah* (dialect) of Tamīm and that he read the Qur'an in the dialect of Tamīm, Khuzā'ah, and others.[52]

Ibn 'Abd al Barr supports this view, pointing out that the dialects of other tribes exist in all *qirā'āt* of the Qur'an, such as the retention of *hamz* (while Quraysh omits it).[53] Abū Shāmah quotes certain scholars as having said that the Qur'an has been revealed not only in the Qurayshī tongue but in those of their neighbors who were fluent speakers, while the Arabs were allowed to read the Qur'an according to their accustomed dialects.[54]

He states elsewhere that the Qur'an includes all Arab dialects, because its revelation was for them all, and that they were permitted to read it according to their different dialects. Thus, the readings of the Qur'an differed. He adds that when the *maṣāḥif* were established, these different readings were abandoned except for those whose *lughāt* (i.e., dialects) corresponded with the orthography of the *maṣāḥif*.[55]

50. Ramaḍān 'Abd al Tawwāb, *Fuṣūl min Fiqh al 'Arabiyyah*, 1st ed. (Cairo: 1971), 81-82.
51. *Nukat al Intiṣār li Naql al Qur'ān*, 385-86.
52. *Ibid.*, 386-87.
53. *Al Burhān*, 1:284; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:27; Ibn Kathīr, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 22; *Itqān*, 2:103.
54. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:27; *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 95.
55. *Ibrāz al Ma'ānī*, 487.

According to Ibn Mālik, the Qur'an has been revealed in the dialect of Ḥijāz, except for a few features that are in accordance with the practice of Tamīm, such as *idghām* (assimilation); for example, the following: "*Wa man yushāqqi Allāha*" (59:4) for Qurayshī *yushāqiq*, which was not read thus by anyone, and "*Wa man yartadda minkum*" (2:217) for Qurayshī *yartadid*.

This assimilation originated with Tamīmī and occurs only rarely, while the Ḥijāzī practice of separating consonants occurs more frequently in the Qur'an; "*yartadid*" (2:217), "*wa al yumlil*" (2:282), "*yuḥbibkum*" (3:31), "*yumdidkum*" (71:12), "*yushāqiq*" (4:115 and 8:13), "*yuḥādid*" (9:63), "*fa al yumdid*" (22:15), "*wa aḥlul*" (20:27), "*isdud*" (20:31) and "*yaḥlil*" (20:81).[56]

The Ḥijāzī practice of separating the consonants is considered by Sībawayh as the best ancient Arabic.[57]

Moreover, all *Qurrā'* have agreed unanimously to read "*illā ittibā' al ẓanni*" (4:157) with *fatḥ*, because this is in accordance with the Ḥijāzī tongue, in which they use *fatḥ* in this type of exception[58] (as opposed to Tamīm, who use *ḍammah*).

Sībawayh studied this type of exception in the section of his book entitled *Hādhā Bābun Yukhtāru fīhi al Naṣbu li'anna al Ākhira Laysa min Naw' al 'Awwal wa Huwa Lughatu Ahl al Ḥijāz* (Preferring the Accusative because the Second Term Is Not in the Same Category as the First, and That Is the Dialect of the Hijāz), as opposed to Tamīm who use *ḍammah* (the nominative).[59]

Thus we find "*mā hadhā basharan*" (12:31)[60] as opposed to Tamīm's "*mā hādhā basharun.*" However, no one recited this passage in the latter manner, according to Sībawayh, except those who were not aware of how it was in the *muṣḥaf*.[61] He, however, opts for the *mā tamīmiyyah* in general on the grounds that it corresponds with analogy.[62]

Ibn Jinnī (392/1001) states that *mā* in Tamīm usage is more analogous but that the Hijāzī is more widely used. He prefers the Hijāzī because it is more widely used and because the Qur'an has been revealed in this language.[63]

56. *Al Burhān*, 1:295-86; *Itqān*, 1:103.
57. *Al Kitāb*, 2:424.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, 1:363-65.
60. *Al Burhān*, 1:286; *Itqān*, 1:103.
61. *Al Kitāb*,1:28.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Al Khaṣā'iṣ*, 1:125.

In addition, the readings of the Qur'an represent various dialects, among them Ḥijāzī and Tamīmī, such as "*bi rabwatin*" (2:265), with *fatḥ* according to Tamīmī practice, this being the reading of Ibn 'Āmir and 'Āṣim, while "*bi rubwatin*" with *ḍammah* is attributed to Quraysh, being the reading of the rest of the ten *Qurrā'*.[64] Ibn Jinnī regards the reading of 7:57, *nushuran*, as more fluent, because it is the language of the Ḥijāzī people, while the Tamīmī version is *nushran*.[65]

The Ḥijāzī *nushuran* is the reading of Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr, Abū Ja'far, and Ya'qūb; and the Tamīmī is the reading only of Ibn 'Āmir.[66] Ibn 'Abd al Barr argues that the statement of 'Umar to Ibn Mas'ūd[67] indicates merely his own preference and does not mean that he forbade Ibn Mas'ūd's reading. He points out that because the Qur'an may be read in seven *aḥruf*, there is no objection to choosing from within the seven *aḥruf*.[68] Ibn Jinnī comments that the Arabs change *hā'* to *'ayn* and vice versa because of the similarity in their place of articulation. He concludes that *'attā* for *ḥattā* is permitted, but that *ḥattā* is preferred because it is more widely used.[69] Ḥammūdah supports this view by referring to certain sound readings attributed to Hudhayl, which were accepted among the *Qurrā'*, such as the readings of Ḥamzah and al Kisā'ī in which they read 3:11 as "*fa li immihi*" instead of "*fa li ummihi*."[70] This interpretation leads to the question of the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*, which has been discussed in detail in Chapter 1. Among the interpretations of the term *aḥruf* mentioned, one is that they refer to certain dialects of the Arabs. However scholars who support this interpretation have differed in identifying the dialects involved. According to certain scholars, all seven *aḥruf* are included in the Muḍarī tongue.[71] Abū 'Ubayd attributes to certain unnamed scholars the view that these seven Muḍarī dialects are those of Quraysh, Kinānah, Asad, Hudhayl, Tamīm, Ḍabbah, and Qays.[72] Ibn 'Abbās is reported by some scholars to have identified these seven as Ka'b of Quraysh (i.e., Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy and Ka'b of Khuzā'ah [i.e., Ka'b Ibn 'Amr of Khuzā'ah]). According to Ibn 'Abbās, branches of Quraysh and Khuzā'ah were neighbors.[73]

64. *Ḥujjat al Qirā'āt*, 146; *Al Muhadhdhab fi-al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*, 1:104.
65. *Al Muḥtasib*, 1:255.
66. *Al Muhadhdhab fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*, 1:241.
67. See p. 96 of this study.
68. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:27.
69. *Al Muḥtasib*, 1:343.
70. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahājāt*, 27.
71. Ibn Kathīr, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 22; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:27.
72. *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 101.
73. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 308; al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:66; *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 93.

However, al Kalbī attributes to Ibn 'Abbās the view that the *aḥruf* are seven dialects, five of them belonging to the A'jāz of Hawāzin. Abū 'Ubayd identifies four of the five as Sa'd Ibn Bakr, Jusham Ibn Bakr, Naṣr Ibn Mu'āwiyah, and Thaqīf. He adds that they were called 'Ulyā Hawāzin (Upper Hawazin) and were considered, along with Suflā Tamīm (Lower Tamīm), the most fluent of the Arabs according to 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā'.[74] However, according to Abū 'Ubayd, Sa'd Ibn Bakr is the most fluent of all Arabs, for the saying is attributed to the Prophet, "I am the most fluent of Arabs because I am Qurayshī and brought up in Sa'd Ibn Bakr."[75] Abū Shāmah attributes to certain unnamed scholars the belief that five of the seven dialects belong to Hawāzin and the remaining two to all the Arabs. In support of this view, it is argued that the Prophet was brought up in Hawāzin and lived with Hudhayl.[76] According to another version, Abū 'Ubayd is reported to have identified the dialects as Quraysh, Hudhayl, Thaqīf, Hawāzin, Kinānah, Tamīm, and Yemen.[77] This view apparently expands the seven *aḥruf* to include nearly all the Arab dialects.

Abū Shāmah and Ibn al Jazarī attribute to certain unnamed scholars the view that the dialects are Sa'd, Thaqīf, Hudhayl, and Quraysh, and that the remaining two are divided among the tongues of all the Arabs.[78] According to Abū Ḥātim al Sijistānī, the dialects are Quraysh, Hudhayl, Tamīm, al Azd, Rabī'ah, Hawāzin, and Sa'd Ibn Bakr.[79]

According to al Ṭabarī, the language of the Qur'an represents some but not all of the dialects of the Arabs, because their tongues and languages were more than seven.[80] According to Ibn Qutaybah and Abū 'Alī al Ahwāzī, all seven *aḥruf* are included in the Qurayshī tongue, in which the Qur'an was exclusively revealed.[81]

Among those who accepted the existence of other dialects in the Qur'an, views differed concerning the most eloquent speakers of the Arabic language. Al Mubarrid states that every Arab whose language has not been changed is fluent according to his people (tribe), and that the meaning of the statement *banū fulān afṣahu min banī fulān* is that Arabs are more similar in their language to the language of the Qur'an and the

74. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 309.
75. *Ibid.*; *Al Muzhir*, 1:210.
76. *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 96.
77. *Ibid.*, 99-100; *Nashr*, 1:24; *Manāhil*, 1:180.
78. *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 100; *Nashr*, 1:24.
79. *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 94; *Itqān*, 1:135.
80. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:46-47.
81. *Itqān*, 1:135.

Quraysh, although the Qur'an has been revealed in all the languages of the Arabs.[82]

Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā' is quoted in different versions as mentioning the most eloquent of Arabs as those in Upper Hawāzin and Lower Tamīm,[83] Upper Hawāzin and Lower Qays, or Upper Hawāzin and Lower Quraysh.[84] According to Abū 'Ubayd, however, Sa'd Ibn Bakr is the most fluent of all Arabs because of the statement attributed to the Prophet discussed above.

Quraysh were regarded as the most eloquent of all the Arabs according to Ibn Fāris,[85] who is followed by al Fārābī, al Suyūṭī,[86] Ibn Khaldūn,[87] and al Rāfi'ī.[88] Ibn al Bāqillānī, as mentioned, considers Quraysh the most eloquent of the Arabs and cites the fluency and clarity of the language of Tamīm. Al Mubarrid, in his *Al Kāmil* and on the authority of al Aṣma'ī, considers Jarm to be the most fluent of all Arabs.[89] Other sources refer to many other tribes, such as Hudhayl and Thaqīf, as being the most eloquent.[90]

The most fluent of all the Arabs after Quraysh, however, according to al Fārābī, are Qays, Tamīm, Asad, Hudhayl, and some parts of Kinānah and Ṭayyi'.[91] Al Rāfi'ī asserts that Quraysh are the most eloquent of all the Arabs, followed by Sa'd ibn Bakr, Jusham ibn Bakr, Nasr ibn Mu'āwiyah and Thaqīf. Following them in fluency are Khuzā'ah, Hudhayl, Kinānah, Asad, and Ḍabbah. They were neighbors of Makkah and visited there frequently. Next in fluency are Qays and other tribes of central Arabia.[92] The number seven, however, according to al Rāfi'ī is symbolic.[93]

The time factor is an important reason for these differences in fluency, eloquence, and clarity of speech, since the tribal societies in Arabia were influenced by non-Arab clients who came to live in settled areas and who later influenced nomadic regions. The philologists are said to have refused to accept information from certain regions and tribes whose dialects were considered the most fluent of all Arabs, such as Thaqīf, the people of Ṭā'if,

82. *Al Fāḍil*, 113.
83. Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*, 309; *Al Fāḍil*, 113.
84. *Al Fāḍil*, 113.
85. *Al Ṣāḥibī*, 52.
86. *Al Muzhir*, 1:211.
87. *Muqaddimah*, 635.
88. *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 65.
89. *Al Kāmil*, 2:233.
90. *Al Muzhir*, 1:211.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *I'jāz al Qur'ān*, 65.
93. *Ibid.*, 70-71.

and the towns of Hijāz, on the grounds that their language was changed and distorted by the influence of foreign clients.[94]

This view of seven dialects with all their different versions has been refuted on the grounds that the Qur'an's text includes many words belonging to other Arab dialects that have not been selected as one of the seven *aḥruf*.[95] Also, if the differences between them were dialectal, 'Umar and Hishām would not have been reported as having differed in reading, because both men belonged to the same Qurayshī tribe.[96] Furthermore, al Ṭabarī regarded as weak (*ḍa'īf*) all traditions mentioning the seven *lughāt* on the basis of their *isnād*, since none of their narrators (such as Qatādah and al Kalbī) is regarded as accepted in any chain.[97]

Ibn al Jazarī states that what is meant by *aḥruf* is not dialects but seven types of linguistic differences.[98] In support of this view, Abū Bakr al Wāsiṭī is reported to have said that forty Arab dialects (*lughāt*) are found in the Qur'an.[99] Al Suyūṭī identifies thirty-two dialects, quoting examples of them in the Qur'an.[100]

Ibn al Naqīb is reported to have said in his *Tafsīr* that the Qur'an includes all Arab dialects.[101] In support of this view, Ayyūb al Sakhtiyānī is reported to have said that the verse, "We sent no Messenger except [to each] in the language of his own people" (14:4), refers to all Arabs.[102] 'Alī and Ibn 'Abbās are also reported as having said that the Qur'an has been revealed according to the dialects of all Arabs.[103] The version of Ibn 'Abbās states that the Prophet taught people in one dialect. When they had difficulty understanding, he started teaching every tribe according to its dialect.[104]

Since the Qur'anic text includes different features of various Arab dialects, this chapter will next discuss the commonly accepted view that the Qur'an has been revealed in the common literary language, this being based on a certain dialect or dialects of the Arabs, whether specified or not.

The following pages will discuss views of modern and contemporary scholars whose arguments and analyses are based on modern methodology and linguistic evidence. However, first we will briefly consider Vollers'

94. *Al Muzhir*, 1:212.
95. *Manāhil*, 1:180-81.
96. *Ibid.; Al Itqān*, 1:136.
97. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 1:66.
98. *Nashr*, 1:24-26, and Chapter 4 of this study.
99. *Itqān*, 1:102.
100. *Ibid.*, 89-104.
101. *Ibid.*, 168.
102. *Al Murshid al Wājīz*, 94.
103. *Ibid.*, 96.
104. *Ibid.*, 96-96.

hypothesis that classical Arabic was based on the speech of the bedouins in Najd and Yamāmah, but was much changed by the poets, while in the rest of Arabia, a quite different language, the precursor of the modern Ḥadarī colloquial, was spoken. Vollers claims that the Qur'an was composed in that popular Arabic and subsequently rewritten in the classical style.[105] However, Vollers' theory has been discarded as too extreme.[106] Rabin differs from Vollers, who

> rejected the official text of the Koran as a grammarian's fabrication and sought its original form in the noncanonical variant readings. This reconstructed text he believed to be representative of 'a popular language', opposed to classical Arabic above all by its lack of cases and moods . . . .[107]

Rabin then presents his own hypothesis: "I accept the Othmanic text as a true presentation of the language Muhammad used, but believe that his literary diction contained some elements of the spoken idiom of his milieu which happens to be a specimen of another lost language."[108] Vollers' view was rejected by R. Geyer and Nöldeke, who rightly point out that there is no support for it in either the oldest traditions nor in the evidence of the Arabic itself.[109] In any case, *i'rāb* is found not only in Arabic, but is an original Semitic feature, being found in Akkadian, Ethiopian, Babylonian, Hebrew, Nabatean, and other Semitic languages.[110] In Nabatean particularly, as Nöldeke established, all cases of *i'rāb—ḍammah, fatḥah,* and *kasrah*—are found.[111] In support of this, the Ḥarrān inscription contains an accusative form; e.g., *dhā al marṭūl.*[112] In the Qur'anic text, there are many examples whose meanings are unclear without taking *i'rāb* into account, such as "*Innamā yakhshā Allāha min 'ibādihi al 'ulamā'u*" (35:28), "*Wa idh ibtalā Ibrāhīma Rabbuhū*" (2:124), "*Wa idhā ḥaḍara al qismata ulū al qurbā*" (4:8), and "*Anna Allāha barī'un min al mushrikīna wa rasūluhū*" (9:3). Moreover, the Qur'an has been received by way of *tawātur* with *i'rāb* in written form and recitation.[113] The teaching of the Qur'an was in accordance with *i'rāb* when it was read in prayers and taught to the students. The

105. *Ancient West-Arabian*, 17.
106. Arberry, *The Seven Odes*, 240.
107. *Ancient West-Arabian*, 4.
108. *Ibid.*
109. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 276.
110. Bergsträsser, *Al Taṭawwur al Naḥwī*, 75; Wolfenshon, *Tārīkh al Lughāt al Sāmiyyah*, 157; Johann Fück, *Al 'Arabiyyah*, 3; Enno Littman, *Arabic Inscriptions* (Leiden: 1914), 37.
111. Nöldeke, *Die Semitischen Sprachen* (Leipzig: 1899), 51 f.
112. *Al Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al 'Arab Qabl al Islām*, 8:549.
113. Wāfī, *Fiqh al Lughah*, 215.

Qurrā' did not differ in the *i'rāb*, except in a few cases that were related to the permission to read the Qur'an according to the seven *aḥruf*.[114]

The system of *i'rāb* in the Arab language dates back to ancient times, and what the grammarians introduced was simply a formulation of the rules governing its use with special reference to the language of the Qur'an and of fluent speakers. Thus, the grammarians created Arabic grammar as a science.[115] 'Alī Wāfī points out that the writing of the *muṣḥaf*, which is received by way of *tawātur*, although free from vocalization, supports the existence of *i'rāb*; e.g., the presence of *alif* in the case of the nunated accusative (e.g., *rasūlan, bashīran,* and *shahīdan*), and *i'rāb* with *ḥurūf* (e.g., *al mu'minūn* and *al mu'minīn*).[116] The Qur'an refers to its language as "clear Arabic language" (26:195) and states that "[it is] a Qur'an in Arabic without any crookedness [therein]" (39:28). This presupposes *i'rāb* to make things clear and understandable. The word *i'rāb*, however, in its earliest appearance in the Arabic lexicon, means "speaking clearly, speaking without incorrectness, without barbarousness, etc."[117] Statements are attributed to the Prophet and certain Companions encouraging Muslims to read the Qur'an according to *i'rāb*.[118] Al Suyūṭī comments that what is meant by *i'rāb* in this context is no more than the knowledge of the meaning of the words. He objects to its interpretation as a grammatical term on the ground that *qirā'ah* (recitation) without it is not considered or accepted in any case and that there would be no reward without it.[119] In this connection, Abū Bakr is reported to have said, "Verily reading the Qur'an with the manner of *i'rāb* is more beloved to me than just memorizing certain verses."[120] This statement is, however, misunderstood by Paul Kahle. He comments that seeking *i'rāb* and asking people to read the Qur'an with *i'rāb* indicates that it used to be read without *i'rāb*, and that the *i'rāb* was later introduced to the text of the Qur'an.[121] The word *i'rāb* in the statement of Abū Bakr, if one accepts its validity, means clarity in reading the Qur'an and does not refer to grammatical terminology, because this meaning evolved after the introduction of *naqṭ al i'rāb* by Abū al Aswad al Du'alī during the reign of 'Abd al Malik Ibn Marwān.[122]

114. See pp. 15-16.
115. Wāfī, *Fiqh al Lughah*, 215.
116. *Ibid.*
117. Lane, *An Arabic English Lexicon*, book I, part 5, 1492.
118. Al Ḥalālī, *Risālah fī al Tajwīd*, 156; *Itqān*, 2:3; Ibn al Anbārī, *Kitāb Īḍāḥ al Waqf wa al Ibtidā'*, 1:15-36.
119. *Itqān*, 2:3.
120. Ibn al Anbārī, *Īḍāḥ*, 1:20, 23.
121. *Die Kairoer Geniza* (London: 1947), 78-84.
122. *Al Muḥkam*, 3-7; *Al Awā'il*, 2:107, 130; see Chapter 3 of this book.

If, however, the Qur'an used to be read without *i'rāb*, this would have been mentioned in the oldest traditions and language sources.[123] Furthermore, certain early scholars are said to have objected to *naqṭ al i'rāb* and *naqṭ al i'jām*, but only on the grounds that they were not in accordance with the orthographical practice of the *salaf*. If the inflectional endings in themselves had been an invention or innovation, these scholars would have protested vigorously, whereas no such protest is mentioned at all.

I'rāb in its grammatical sense, as Ibn Fāris states, "distinguishes the meaning, and with the use of *i'rāb* we understand what the speakers meant."[124]

As al Anṭākī notes, it is unlikely that a group of grammarians could impose on Arabic these fabricated characteristics and force people to accept and use them so quickly without any resistance or rejection. In addition, the idea of invention in the field of languages is not acceptable, and, while languages evolve, this is a gradual process. Thus, one can say that the language of the Qur'an is a natural tongue in its development, and its characteristics and qualities date back to centuries before Islam.[125]

To return to the main discussion, the differences between dialects spoken in the main part of Arabia (Hijāz, Najd, and the Euphrates region), according to Nöldeke, "were small and the literary language is based on all of them equally."[126] Classical Arabic, according to Lyall, is "a language of poetic convention of tribal wordstocks that had grown up with the absorbtion of the immense vocabulary of the *Jāhiliyyah*'s *qaṣīdah* and its great number of synonyms."[127]

However, classical Arabic, states Guidi, is a mixture of dialects spoken in Najd and adjoining regions, but not identical with any one of them.[128]

Nallino maintains that the classical Arabic was based on the colloquial language of the tribes of Ma'add, which were united because of the rise of the kingdom of Kindah, whose kings welcomed poets and rewarded them generously. According to Nallino, this colloquial tongue became the common literary language in the middle of the sixth century A.D. and dominated most of the Arabian peninsula, including Madīnah, Makkah, and Ṭā'if in Hijāz.[129] Fischer and Hartmann held the

123. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 276.
124. *Al Ṣāḥibī*, 76.
125. *Al Wajīz fī Fiqh al Lughah*, 129-32.
126. *Ancient West-Arabian*, 17.
127. Sir Charles J. Lyall, *Al Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 1:xxv-xxvi.
128. *Ancient West-Arabian*, 17.
129. Nallino, "Kayfa Nasha'at al Lughah al 'Arabiyyah," *Majallat al Hilāl* 26, 1 (October 1917):41-48.

view that classical Arabic was identical to a particular dialect but did not specify which one.[130]

Brockelmann, like Wetzstein and others before him, claims that "classical Arabic was never spoken in the form in which we know it." He does not discuss its relation to the dialects.[131] Elsewhere, he describes the language of the Qur'an as based on the dialect of Quraysh.[132] Bergsträsser, in his *Al Taṭawwur al Naḥwī li al Lughah al 'Arabiyyah,*[133] may be quoted in favor of what he calls Ḥijāzī dialect, because he states that the orthography of the *muṣḥaf* was in accordance with Ḥijāzī dialect.[134] Wolfensohn argues that this common literary language is a mixture of many dialects and that they became a united language after the disappearance of their speakers.[135]

Blachère claims that the literary Arabic language is based on a native dialect, but he does not say which one. He objects to the Qurayshī dialect as the native dialect on which the literary language was based.[136] Rabin offers what he calls the working hypothesis that "classical Arabic is based on one or several of the dialects of Najd, perhaps in archaic form."[137] The language of the Qur'an, according to Beeston, "is unmistakably that of the poetic corpus of the sixth century."[138] He, however, maintains that it was first written down in a form reflecting the pronunciation of the Western dialect of Makkah. He adds that the scholars succeeded in introducing certain features characteristic of the Eastern dialects by adding reading marks to the language.[139]

However, most Western scholars generally agree that classical Arabic originated among the bedouins of Najd. Some believe it to have been originally the language of one tribe, others a combination of various dialects. Some also think it acquired some purely artificial characteristics.[140]

However, Wansbrough, in his *Qur'anic Studies,*[141] devotes a chapter to the "origin of classical Arabic"[142] in which, unlike the others, he rejects the concept of the literary Arabic language without offering any clear alternative. He asserts that little is known about the text of the Qur'an or about

130. *Ancient West-Arabian*, 17.
131. *Ibid.*
132. *Fiqh al Lughāt al Sāmiyyah*, 30.
133. Published in Cairo: Maṭba'at al Sa'ādah, 1929.
134. *Ibid.*, 27.
135. *Tārīkh al Lughāt al Samiyyāh*, 166.
136. *Tārīkh al Adab al 'Arab, al 'Aṣr al Jāhilī*, 77.
137. *Ancient West-Arabian*, 3.
138. *The Arabic Language Today*, 13.
139. *Ibid.*
140. C. Rabin, art. *'Arabiyya*, E.I.², 1:565.
141. Oxford University Press, 1977.
142. *Ibid.*, 85-118.

classical Arabic prior to the "literary stabilization of both in the third/ninth century." Nothing, he maintains, in the Qur'anic usage of the word *'arabī* and its cognate form supports Fück's suggestion (*'Arabiyya*, Berlin 1905, 1-5) that *'arabī* in the expression "clear Arabic speech" refers to the *'arabiyya* that was the literary language of the bedouins.[143]

Watt's final conclusion, however, is that the language of the Qur'an falls somewhere between the poetical koine and the Makkan dialect. He also notes the omission of the *hamzah* or glottal stop, which is mentioned as a peculiarity of Makkan speech and has affected the orthography of the Qur'an.[144] Alternatively, he states that one might say that the Qur'an was written in a Makkan variant of the literary language.

This common literary language, however, according to certain contemporary Arab philologists, should not be attributed to a particular tribe, but to all Arab tribes. Because this language has accepted elements from all the tribes, it seems to be similar to all of them.[145]

'Alī Wāfī[146] accepts the view that the Qur'an is revealed in the common literary language, but disagrees with Western scholars in that he, like Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and others before him, asserts that this common language is based on the Qurayshī speech. In order to reconcile these two ideas, he postulates that the Qurayshī influence spread throughout Arabia well before Islam. He agrees with Vendryes in pointing out that the formation of a standard or common language is "due either to the extension of an organized political power, to the influence of a predominant social class, or to the supremacy of a literature. Whatever may be its recognized origin, there are always political, social or economic reasons which contribute to its preservation."[147] 'Alī Wāfī then argues that at least the second and third of these reasons apply to Quraysh. Their dominating dialect then became the language of art, as well as of prose and poetry. It also was the language of correspondence, conferences, negotiations, and the delegations' speeches and poems.[148] 'Alī Wāfī's arguments for this theory are not based on any linguistic evidence, but on what he sees as the dominant cultural and economic position enjoyed by Makkah in the *Jāhiliyyah* period. 'Alī Wāfī's arguments are used by most Arab scholars and researchers with certain additions or modifications.[149]

143. A. T. Welch, art. *al Kur'an*, E.I.², 5:419.
144. *Introduction to the Qur'an*, 84.
145. Tammām Ḥassan, *Al Lughah Bayn al Mi'yāriyyah wa al Waṣfiyyah*, 61-62.
146. *Fiqh al Lughah al 'Arabiyyah*, 111.
147. *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History*, 261.
148. *Fiqh al Lughah al 'Arabiyyah*, 111-12.
149. Ḥammūdah, *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt* (Cairo: 1948); Shāhīn, *Fī 'Ilm al Lughah al 'Amm* (Cairo: 1980); Mahdī al Makhzūmī, *Madrasat al Kūfah* (Baghdad: 1955).

Furthermore, this common literary language of pre-Islamic verse and prose is, according to Ḥammūdah, the language in which the Qur'an has been revealed. However, he adds that the origin of this language is the *lahjah* (dialect) of Quraysh or what is called the Ḥijāzī dialect.[150] Moreover, Anīs refers to the occasions of pilgrimage, general gatherings, and cultural conferences before Islam, which were factors in uniting the Arabic language on the basis of the Qurayshī dialect.[151] He maintains elsewhere that the most eloquent manner of pausing in Qur'anic verses, which is dominant in the Qur'an, is that of Quraysh and Ḥijāz.[152] However, he asserts elsewhere that the language of the Qur'an represents the common literary language of all Arabs and not only of Quraysh.[153]

The Qurayshī dialect, however, is argued to have contributed many elements and features to the common literary language, to the extent that attributing it generally to Quraysh or Ḥijāz may be accurate, as most scholars believe.[154] But the Qur'an contains many other elements and features that are known to have disagreed with that of the Ḥijāzī people, including Quraysh.[155]

Al Ghamrāwī, who accepts the common literary language, asserts that the only difference between Qurayshī and other dialects is that the influence of common literary language on the Qurayshī dialect was so great (because Quraysh were close to the markets). He distinguishes between the literary and spoken language of Quraysh and postulates that both were influenced by the common literary language (while for other tribes, this influence was mainly on the language of poems).[156]

However, objections have been raised against the view that the language of the Qur'an is based on the Qurayshī dialect. These objections may be summarized as follows:

1. The only reason for the Qurayshī dialect to be favored is theological, rather than linguistic (i.e., the Quraysh are the tribe of the Prophet).[157]
2. The *Mufassirūn* quoted other dialects and cited poets belonging to other tribes to interpret the meaning of archaic words.
3. The Quraysh tribe included few poets.
4. The philologists refer to bedouin dialects rather than to the Qurayshī

150. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 30.
151. *Fī al Lahajāt al 'Arabiyyah*, 32.
152. *Min Asrār al Lughah*, 215.
153. *Mustaqbal al Lughah al 'Arabiyyah*, 9.
154. *Fuṣūl min Fiqh al 'Arabiyyah*, 69.
155. *Ibid.*
156. *Al Naqd al Taḥlīlī*, 210.
157. Nöldeke, *Die Semitischen Sprachen*.

dialect.

5. The *Sūq 'Ukāẓ* had only been established shortly before Islam.[158]
6. Certain non-Qurayshī features, such as *hamz,* are dominant in the Qur'an.[159]

These points were, in turn, refuted by supporters of the view that the language of the Qur'an is based on the Qurayshī dialect. They objected on the grounds that the Qur'an contains other dialect features that were to be interpreted with reference to their origins,[160] but that it was the influence of non-Arabs on the tongue of the Ḥijāzī people after the spread of Islam that led the philologists to seek the pure language in the areas which were not occupied by non-Arabs or where their numbers were very small.[161] As for the towns, the purity of language (*faṣāḥah*) vanished after the first half of the second century A.H.[162] The philologists found during their research that the Qurayshī tongue had become distorted,[163] but they continued collecting from bedouins and accepting their dialects until the middle or end of the fourth century A.H.[164] Furthermore, *'Ukāẓ* had come into existence not shortly before Islam, as claimed, but at least a century before.[165]

In conclusion, the Qur'an refers to the language in which it has been revealed as "Arabic without any crookedness (therein)" (39:28) and a "clear Arabic language" (26:195).

This *'arabiyyah* referred to in the Qur'an is neither Qurayshī nor another language, but the common literary language of the people of Ḥijāz, Najd, and other regions of the Arabian peninsula. Thus the Qur'an, which was revealed in this language, could be understood by all, just as when the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* meeting in Madīnah communicated and understood each other by the same. The delegations came to the Prophet from various parts of Arabia, and the Prophet sent teachers with them. Apparently, they had no difficulty in communicating or in understanding the Qur'an.[166]

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158. Nallino, "Kayfa Nasha'at al Lughah al Arabiyyah," 41-48; E.I.[2], 1:565; C. Rabin, art *'Arabiyya.*
159. 'Abduh al Rājiḥī, *Al Lahajāt al 'Arabiyyah fi'l Qirā'āt al Qur'āniyyah* (Cairo: 1968).
160. Shawqī Ḍayf, *Al 'Aṣr al Jāhilī,* 133-37; Naḥlah, *Lughat al Qur'ān fī Juz' 'Amma,* 74-75.
161. Ibn Khaldūn, *Al Muqaddimah,* 635; Shawqī Ḍayf, *Al 'Aṣr al Jāhilī,* 136-37; *Al Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al Naḥw al 'Arabī,* 18.
162. *Khizānat al Adab,* 1:5-6; *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab,* 1:338.
163. *Al Muzhir,* 1:211.
164. *Tārīkh Ādāb al 'Arab,* 1:128, 345; *Ṭuruq Tanmiyat al Alfāẓ,* 11-12.
165. *Aswāq al 'Arab,* 342- 43; Lane, *Lexicon,* vi (introduction).
166. Ibn Hishām, *Al Sirah,* 7:357-427; Ibn Sa'd, *Al Ṭabaqāt al Kubrā,* 1:258-358; Shawqī, *Al 'Aṣr al Jāhilī,* 134; al Ghamrāwī, *Al Naqd al Taḥlīlī,* 210-11.

If the Qur'an had not been revealed in this common literary language of all the Arabs, it would have been difficult for these people to understand it or to be influenced by its verses.

The Qur'an's effect on all Arab dialects was so great that it eventually had an overwhelming influence on all literary endeavors. This does not mean, however, that all dialectal features of the Arabs no longer existed. In fact, the text of the Qur'an contains features of various Arabic dialects.

Although the orthography of the *masāhif* is said to be according to the Qurayshī dialect,[167] the text of the Qur'an still allows variant readings, since permission was given to all Arabs to read the Qur'an in various ways according the seven *aḥruf.* Thus, in practice, one finds various dialects in sound, accepted readings or in canonical readings (*qirā'āt mutawātirah*). For example, in *lākinnā* (18:38) and *anā uḥyī* (2:258), the final *ā* is pronounced long in both continued speech and pausal form according to the reading of Abū Jaf'ar and Nāfi' of Madīnah (being Tamīmī), while according to the other tribes and readings it is preserved only in its pausal form.[168]

Although the language of the Qur'an represents many Arab dialects, it might be argued to have been based mainly on the dialect of Quraysh and their eloquent neighbors in Ḥijāz and Najd, particularly Tamīm. In the variant canonical readings of the Qur'an, as discussed in this chapter, one observes the existence of various Arab dialects as regards etymology, vocabulary, grammar, and morphology but Qurashī or Ḥijāzī is generally more dominant.

167. *Bukhārī*, 6:479; *Ibānah*, 33; *Al 'Arabiyyah*, 4; *Al Taṭawwur al Naḥwī*, 27; *Al Munjid*, 22; *Al Muqni'*, 114.

168. Abū Shāmah, *Ibrāz al Ma'ānī*, 383; al Bannā, *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al Bashar*, 193.

CHAPTER 6

THE ORIGIN OF THE *QIRĀ'ĀT*

The Prophet received revelations of the Qur'an in portions of ayats, taught them to his Companions, and recited them in his own prayers and while leading prayers before the Companions.[1] In this connection, the Qur'an addresses the Prophet:

> Move not your tongue concerning the [Qur'an] to make haste therewith. It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it: but when We have promulgated it, follow its recital [as promulgated]: then it is for Us to explain it [and make it clear]. (75:16-19)

The Qur'an also characterizes its revelation as being in stages:

> [It is] a Qur'an which We have divided [into parts from time to time] in order that you might recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages. (17:106)

Furthermore, the Prophet asked certain Companions to recite to him. In this connection, 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have been asked by the Prophet to recite for him from the Qur'an and that he recited 3:1-41.[2] Ubayy Ibn Ka'b is also reported to have said that the Prophet asked him to recite for him and that he recited surah 98.[3]

The Muslims studied and read the Qur'an from the very early Makkan era. For example, Ibn Isḥāq reported that when 'Umar visited his sister and her husband he found them with their teacher Khabbāb Ibn al Aratt reading and studying from a *ṣaḥīfah* surahs 20 and 81.[4] It is attributed to the Prophet

1. See Chapter 2, 41, 44.
2. *Bukhārī*, 6:87-88.
3. *Ibid.*, 456-57.
4. *Sīrat Ibn Iṣḥāq*, 161-62.

that whenever he received Qur'anic verses, he taught them to his Companions, the men first and then the women in a special circle.[5]

Certain learned *Qurrā'* were directed by the Prophet, when he was in Makkah before the Hijrah, to teach the Qur'an to the people in Madīnah. The first *Qāri'* was Muṣ'ab Ibn 'Umayr,[6] and he was followed by 'Abd Allāh Ibn Umm Maktūm, 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir, and Bilāl.[7] In Madīnah after the Hijrah, whenever individuals or delegations of newly converted Muslims came to the Prophet, he would appoint one of his learned Companions to teach them the Qur'an.[8] Furthermore, the Prophet is reported to have sent *Qurrā'* to certain places and tribes, particularly after conquering Makkah. In Makkah itself, Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal was appointed to teach the people the Qur'an.[9] The number of *Qurrā'* who had committed the Qur'an to memory was increasing gradually to the extent that at Bi'r Ma'ūnah alone, in 5 A.H., seventy or forty of them were killed.[10]

Among the Companions and their Followers who settled in different conquered cities, the number of *Qurrā'* was considerable. Ibn Sa'd, in his *Kitāb al Ṭabaqāt,* counted hundreds who settled in Kūfah, Baṣrah, Shām, and so on, and their students who transmitted from them.[11] After the days of the Prophet, his caliphs appointed prominent *Qurrā'* to the cities; for example, Abū al Dardā' was sent to Damsacus, 'Ubādah Ibn al Ṣāmit to Ḥims, and Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal to Palestine.[12] 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd was appointed to teach the people of Kūfah,[13] and Abū Mūsā al Ash'arī was sent to Baṣrah.[14]

After he compiled the *maṣāḥif,* 'Uthmān, is reported to have appointed a *Qāri'* to each of the *amṣār* to which a *muṣḥaf* was sent, specifically to teach the people of the city according to it.[15]

Orthographical differences are reported among the *maṣāḥif* of the cities prepared by the command of 'Uthmān. Certain scholars assert that these variations were intended to accommodate all authentic readings received from the Prophet according to the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf.* The variations that could not be allocated in a single *muṣḥaf*

5. *Ibid.*, 128.
6. *Ghāyat al Nihāyah*, 2:299.
7. Al Zinjānī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 40.
8. *Tartīb al Musnad*, 18:9.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Chapter 2, 25 in this book.
11. *Al Ṭabaqāt al Kubrā*, 7:5-493.
12. *Ibid.*, 2:356-57.
13. *Ibid.*, 6:3-14.
14. *Ibid.*, 2:345.
15. *Manāhil*, 1:403-4; *Ma' al Maṣāḥif*, 90-91; see Chapter 2, 48.

were divided among the *maṣāḥif* of the cities.[16] For example, it is reported that in 2:132 we find *wa awṣā* written in the *maṣāḥif* of Madīnah and Shām, while in the rest of the *maṣāḥif* it is written *wa waṣṣā* with the omission of *alif*.[17] In addition, it is agreed that the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* were free from *naqṭ* both of *i'rāb* and *i'jām*, this also being in order to accommodate various dialects and readings that were permitted in reading the Qur'an according to certain authorities, until the time came to use the *naqṭ*s of *i'rāb* and *i'jām*.[18] Ibn Taymiyyah, followed by Ibn al Jazarī, asserts that the *maṣāḥif* in the time of the Companions were freed from *naqṭ* for the following reasons:

1. The Companions depended on their memories rather than on the *maṣāḥif*, bearing in mind that the Qur'an is transmitted with *tawātur*. In addition, the Qur'an was revealed in portions to facilitate its memorization. Thus they did not need to depend on a book as the People of the Book did.
2. Being Arabs, they did not need *naqṭ* because they did not commit *laḥn*.
3. They wished to preserve the possibility of different readings such as *ya'malūna* and *ta'malūna*.

N*aqṭ* was introduced during the lifetime of the Followers, when some of them started using *naqṭ* in their *maṣāḥif* with different colors because of the appearance of *laḥn* at that time.[19]

As regards *naqṭ al i'jām*, it has been argued that it has always been found with the alphabetical letters, because it was difficult to distinguish between them without using it.[20]

Schools of reading in all the cities were established according to the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. Any reading which did not correspond with them was abandoned, and the personal codices were destroyed by the command of 'Uthmān.[21] The *maṣāḥif* and readings of the *amṣār* became famous and were adopted throughout the Muslim world. Hence, all canonical readings are attributed to the *Qurrā'* of the *amṣār*, among whom are the following:

1. In Madīnah: Mu'ādh al Qārī, Sa'īd Ibn al Musayyib, 'Urwah Ibn al Zubayr, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al 'Azīz, 'Aṭā' Ibn Yasār, Sālim Ibn 'Abd Allāh, Sulaymān Ibn Yasār, Muslim Ibn Jundub, 'Abd al Raḥmān Ibn

16. *Al Muqni'*, 123-24; *Nashr*, 1:33.
17. *Al Muqni'*, 109.
18. *Al Muḥkam*, 2.; also see Chapter 3, 106-09.
19. *Fatāwā*, 12:100-1; *Nashr*, 1:7-8; *Al Ibānah*, 68.
20. *Ṣubḥ al A'shā*, 3:151; also see Chapter 3, 107.
21. *Bukhari*, 6:479.

Hurmuz, Ibn Shihāb al Zuhrī, and Zayd Ibn Aslam.

2. In Makkah: 'Ubayd Ibn 'Umayr, 'Aṭā', Ṭāwūs, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, and Ibn Abī Mulaykah.
3. In Kūfah: 'Alqamah, al Aswad, Masrūq, 'Ubaydah, 'Amr Ibn Shuraḥbīl, al Ḥārith Ibn Qays, al Rabī' Ibn Khaytham, 'Amr Ibn Maymūn, Abū 'Abd al Raḥmān al Sulamī, Zarr Ibn Ḥubaysh, 'Ubayd Ibn Faḍīlah, Abū Zar'ah Ibn 'Amr Ibn Jarīr, Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, Ibrāhīm al Nakha'ī, and Sha'bī.
4. In Baṣrah: 'Āmir Ibn 'Abd Qays, Abū al 'Alīyah, Abū Rajā', Naṣr Ibn 'Āṣim, Yaḥyā Ibn Ya'mur, Mu'ādh, Jābir Ibn Zayd, al Ḥasan, Ibn Sīrīn, and Qatādah.
5. In Shām: al Mughīrah Ibn Abī Shihāb al Makhzūmī (a pupil of 'Uthmān) and Khulayd Ibn Sa'd (a pupil of Abū al Dardā').[22]

The generation that followed these *Qurrā'* was more specialized, and some scholars taught only *qirā'āt*. The people of their cities and students from other places migrated to learn from them. The readings thus were attributed to them because they had taught *qirā'āt* for a long time, because of their *ikhtiyār*[23] in *qirā'ah* and because people of their cities agreed on their *qirā'āt*. These scholars include the following:

1. In Madīnah: Abū Ja'far Yazīd Ibn al Qa'qā', Shaybah Ibn Naṣāḥ, and Nāfi' Ibn Abī Nu'aym.
2. In Makkah: 'Abd Allāh Ibn Kathīr, Ḥumayd Ibn Qays al A'raj, and Muḥammad Ibn Ḥusayn.
3. In Kūfah: Yaḥyā Ibn Waththāb, 'Āṣim Ibn Abī al Najūd, Sulaymān Ibn al A'mash, Ḥamzah, and al Kisā'ī.
4. In Baṣrah: 'Abd Allāh Ibn Abī Isḥāq, 'Īsā Ibn Abī 'Umar, Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā', 'Āṣim al Juḥdarī, and Ya'qūb al Ḥaḍramī.
5. In Shām: 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Āmir, 'Aṭiyyah Ibn Qays al Kilābī, Ismā'īl Ibn 'Abd Allāh al Muhājir, Yaḥyā Ibn al Ḥārith al Dhimārī, and Shurayḥ Ibn Yazīd al Ḥaḍramī.[24]

No differences had been reported in readings of the Companions in the Makkan era. The first reports of this phenomenon were in Madīnah, after the Hijrah and during the lifetime of the Prophet. In this connection, certain Companions were reported to have differed in reading certain *aḥruf* of the Qur'an and to have sought the Prophet's arbitration. Each of them sup-

22. *Nashr*, 1:8.
23. For an explanation of this term, see Chapter 7.
24. *Nashr*, 1:8-9.

ported his reading by stating that he had been taught it by the Prophet himself. For example, 'Umar and Hishām were reported to have differed before the Prophet and then to have referred each man's reading to the Prophet, who asserted that the Qur'an had been revealed in both ways.[25] These differences in readings continued even after the compilation of 'Uthmān, although Muslims were now ordered to read and teach the Qur'an according to the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and the teaching of authorized *Qurrā'*. Thus, all readings that did not correspond with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* were rejected and regarded as *shādhdh*.[26] Ibn Manẓūr, in his *Lisān al 'Arab*, adopts this view, quoting in support al Azharī, Ibn Mujāhid, and Ibn al Anbārī.[27]

Al Zajjāj is quoted as having said that it is not permissible to read any reading that does not correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* on the grounds that it is sunnah to follow them and read according to them.[28] Ibn al Jazarī reports on the authority of 'Umar and Zayd Ibn Thābit among the Companions, and of their Followers Ibn al Mukandir, 'Urwah Ibn al Zubayr, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al 'Azīz , and 'Āmir al Sha'bī, that *qirā'ah* is sunnah and that it was taught by the *salaf* to their descendants, and thus any reading should be according to it.[29]

This statement, according to al Bayhaqī and Ismā'īl al Qāḍī, is to be interpreted to the effect that we should follow any reading of the *salaf* that is consistent with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and that disagreeing with the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* is forbidden.[30]

The Development of the Conditions for Accepted Readings

The Companions and their Followers read the Qur'an as they had been taught by the Prophet and by those whom he authorized to teach others. The only condition for the authenticity and acceptability of a *qirā'ah* was that it should be read in accordance with *riwāyah*, since whenever the Companions and the Followers differed in reading they referred it back to the *riwāyah*, stating that they had been taught it by the Prophet.[31] The Followers also referred their readings to prominent *Qurrā'* of the Companions, such as Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd, and Zayd

25. *Bukhārī*, 6:482-83.
26. *Munjid*, 16-17; *Nashr*, 1:14; *Laṭā'if*, 1:64; *Itqān*, 1:213-14.
27. *Lisān al 'Arab*, 10:386.
28. *Ibrāz al Ma'ānī*, 397.
29. *Nashr*, 1:17.
30. *Al Ibānah*, 69-73; *Itqān*, 1:211.
31. *Bukhārī*, 6:482.

Ibn Thābit.[32] Accordingly, the scholars agreed unanimously that transmitting of the *qirā'ah* must be learnt directly from the *Qāri'*, who was taught it according to an *isnād* traced back to the Prophet (on the grounds that this had been the practice with the Qur'an, as the Prophet had learned it from Jibrīl and taught it to his Companions accordingly).[33] After the compilation of 'Uthmān, all the *Qurrā'* were asked to read only according to the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. For this reason, the personal codices were collected and destroyed.[34] Eventually, the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* dominated all the cities (*amṣār*), but with some slight resistance, for instance, as in the case of Ibn Mas'ūd[35] and Ibn Shunbūdh.[36]

Al Qasṭallānī maintains that some people of innovation (*bid'ah*) started reading the Qur'an from the *maṣāḥif* without depending on *riwāyah* or transmission of *isnād* in order to support their theological views, such as the reading attributed to certain Mu'tazilites, "*wa kallama Allāha Mūsā taklīman*" while the authentic reading is, "*wa kallama Allāhu Mūsā taklīman*" (4:164). Another example of such an unauthentic reading was attributed to certain Shi'ahs, "*wa mā kuntu muttakhidha al muḍillayn 'aḍudan,*" to interpret it as referring to Abū Bakr and 'Umar (the authentic reading is "*al muḍillīn*" (18:51), with a plural form instead of dual).

Al Qasṭallānī argues that, in this way, the scholars chose certain *Qurrā'* from each city to which the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* were sent on the basis of authenticity, integrity, knowledge, long experience in teaching *qirā'āt*, correspondence of their readings with the orthography of 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, and the consensus of the people of their cities on accepting them.[37] Al Ṭabarī is quoted, in his *Kitāb al Qirā'āt*, as having authenticated all readings, provided that they corresponded to the orthography of 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and were transmitted from the Prophet with authentic *isnād*.[38] Ibn Mujāhid introduces more conditions, considering in his evaluation of *qirā'ah* the *Qāri'* rather than the *qirā'ah*. According to his criteria the acceptability of a *qirā'ah* requires the following conditions:

1. The *Qāri'* should be perfect in his memorization of the Qur'an.
2. He should have knowledge of different ways of *i'rāb*, *qirā'āt*, and *lughāt*.
3. He must rely on *riwāyah* (narration) and *isnād*.

32. Al Ja'barī, *Kanz al Ma'ānī*, fol. 15.
33. *Bukhārī*, 6:481-83.
34. *Ibid.*, 482-83, 485-86.
35. See p. 31 of this book.
36. See p. 124 below.
37. *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt*, 1:66.
38. *Al Ibānah*, 53.

4. The people of his city must reach consensus on his *qirā'ah*.

Ibn Mujāhid (324/935) asserts that the seven *Qurrā'* of Hijāz, Iraq, and Shām, whose readings he collected in his *Kitāb al Sab'ah*, were the descendants of the *Tābi'ūn* and that their *qirā'āt* were accepted unanimously in their own and neighboring cities.[39] In connection with the conditions for accepted readings, a new development took place when Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib studied and classified them in his *Al Ibānah*, considering in his evaluation the *qirā'ah* rather than the *Qurrā'*. According to him, any *qirā'ah* is acceptable if it agrees with the following three conditions:

1. Authentic transmission from the Prophet,
2. Linguistic soundness, and
3. Orthographic agreement with one of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[40]

Ibn al 'Arabī (543/1148), in his *Al 'Awāṣim min al Qawāṣim*,[41] attributes these three conditions to certain unnamed scholars and approves them.[42] Ibn al Jazarī adopts Makkī's conditions with slight modifications as follows:

1. Soundness of the *isnād*,
2. Consistency with the Arabic language in any of the forms of fluency, even if of lesser eloquence, and
3. Agreement with the orthography of one of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, either directly (such as the reading *malik* [1:3]), or indirectly (i.e., in a way that is consistent with the orthography as in the reading *mālik*).[43]

Ibn al Jazarī elsewhere opted for the *tawātur* (successiveness of *isnād*) of *qirā'ah*,[44] but changed this to soundness on the grounds that if there is *tawātur*, then there is no need to seek other conditions.[45]

The soundness of *isnād* here means that it should consist of more than *āḥād* (isolated reports) and that, although it may not be *mutawātir*, it should at least be *mashhūr*. This view is supported by Makkī, al Baghawī, al Sakhāwī, Abū Shāmah, and Ibn al Jazarī.[46] According to them, a reading is acceptable when it comes through a sound, *mashhūr isnād* that is supported by its fluency in Arabic and its agreement with the orthography of

39. *Kitāb al Sab'ah*, 87.
40. *Al Ibānah*, 51, 90-91.
41. Edited by Ṭālibī, 2 vols.
42. *Ibid.*, 2:485.
43. *Nashr*, 1:9.
44. *Munjid*, 15.
45. *Nashr*, 1:13.
46. *Al Ibānah*, 51; *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 145, 172; *Nashr*, 1:13.

one of the 'Uthmānic *masāhif.* If one of these three conditions is not met, the reading should not be accepted but should be regarded as *shādhdh.*[47] In support of his views on the three conditions for accepted readings, Ibn al Jazarī quotes earlier scholars (Makkī, al Dānī, al Mahdawī, Abū Shāmah, and al Kawāshī) and then adds that this is the view of all the *salaf* without exception.[48] Ibn al 'Arabī, Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī, al Qasṭallānī, and al Suyūṭī agree, quoting many other named and unnamed scholars as having supported this view.[49]

However, according to al Ja'burī, the only condition for an accepted reading is the authenticity of its *isnād,* which necessarily includes the other requirements of fluency and orthography.[50] While according to al Hudhalī, in his *Al Kāmil,* all readings agreeing with the *maṣāḥif* are accepted provided that they do not contradict the *ijmā'.*[51]

According to al Zurqānī, certain scholars did not make *tawātur* an obligatory condition of the accepted readings because the Qur'an is *mutawātir*, for the acceptability of a *qirā'ah* the three conditions might be enough to give knowledge that is the same as *mutawātir.*[52]

Al Nuwayrī (897/1492) objects to the view discussed above—that *tawātur* should not be obligatory—because, according to him, most scholars, like al Ghazzālī, Ibn al Ḥājib, Ibn 'Abd al Barr, Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, al Nawawī, and al Zarkashī, demand *tawātur* as a condition for the acceptability of a reading. In addition, he states that the view that does not impose the condition of *tawātur* is an innovation and contradicts the consensus of jurisprudents, *Muḥaddithūn,* and others. Moreover, he asserts that Makkī was the first one to differ and that he was followed by certain late scholars.[53] Al Bannā' al Dimyāṭī, following the views of al Nuwayrī, asserts that Makkī was the first one who did not impose the condition of *tawātur* for accepted readings.[54]

Al Ṣafāqisī (1118/1706) argues that, according to *Uṣūlīs, Fuqahā',* and the *Qurrā', tawātur* is essential for the authenticity of a *qirā'ah.* Accordingly, a *qirā'ah* cannot be authentic with only a sound chain, even if it agrees with the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* and fluency in Arabic, as was maintained by Makkī and then Ibn al Jazarī.[55] He adds that this *madhhab* of Makkī and Ibn al Jazarī is not reliable, because it does not differentiate

47. *Ibid.*
48. *Nashr,* 1:9, 44; *Itqān,* 1:210.
49. Ibn al 'Arabī, *Al 'Awāṣim,* 2:485; *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 9:32; *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:67; *Itqān,* 1:225.
50. *Nashr,* 1:13; *Itqān,* 1:211.
51. *Nashr,* 1:36.
52. *Manāhil al 'Irfān,* 1:427.
53. *Al Qawl al Jādhdh li man Qarā'a bi al Shādhdh* and *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:70.
54. *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al Bashar,* 6.
55. *Ghayth al Naf',* 6.

between what is Qur'an and what is not. Furthermore, according to al Ṣafāqisī, differing versions given by the *Qurrā'* do not affect the successiveness of a *qirā'ah*, because it can be successive according to one group of *Qurrā'* even if it is not according to all of them. He states, therefore, that *shādhdh* is what is not successive.[56]

Most jurisprudents do not accept a *qirā'ah* except with *tawātur* of its transmission. Only the Ḥanafis accept the *shurah* of an *isnād*.[57]

Ibn Miqsam (332/943) is reported to have read according to the two conditions of agreement with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and fluency in the Arabic language. His reading, because it omitted the first condition of authenticity of *isnād*, was abandoned and rejected by the scholars. He was questioned by leading scholars of his time and was forbidden to continue, after which he is reported to have repented and returned to the consensus of the scholars.[58]

Ibn al Bāqillānī regards those readings that conflict with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* as having nonsuccessive chains (*akhbār āḥād*) and maintains that it is not permissible to read the Qur'an except in successive transmission. He adds that all the Muslims have agreed among that it is not permissible to write or to read the Qur'an according to these anomalous *shādhdh* readings.[59]

However, all scholars, including Ibn al Jazarī, regard any reading that omits the first condition of transmission as false and fabricated, and maintain that whoever intentionally reads in this way is to be considered an unbeliever (*kāfir*).[60]

The orthographical differences among the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* are known from various works and books composed on the subject by early scholars who had studied the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. In this respect, reference may be made to Abū 'Ubayd's *Faḍā'il al Qur'ān*,[61] Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al Sab'ah*,[62] al Dānī's *al Muqni' fī Rasm Masāḥif al Amṣār*[63] and *al Muḥkam fī Naqṭ al Maṣāḥif*,[64] and al Mahdawī's *Hijā' Maṣāḥif al Amṣār*.[65] In the anonymous *Muqaddimat Kitāb al Mabānī fī Naẓm al Ma'ānī*,[66] the fifth

56. *Ibid.*, 7.
57. Al Zafzāf, *Al Ta'rīf bi al Qur'ān wa al Ḥadīth*, 54-55.
58. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 60; *Munjid*, 52; *Nashr*, 1:17; *Ghāyat al Nihāyah*, 2:124-25.
59. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 100-2.
60. *Munjid*, 17.
61. Edited by Jawharī (Makkah: 1398/1973).
62. Edited by Shawqī Ḍayf (Cairo: 1972).
63. Edited by Otto Pretzl (Istanbul: 1932).
64. Edited by 'Izzat (Damascus: 1972).
65. Edited by M. Ramaḍān in *Majallat Ma'had al Makhṭūṭāt al 'Arabiyyah* 19, part I, (1973):75-141.
66. Anon., published with the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn 'Aṭiyyah in *Muqaddimatān*, edited by Jeffery (Cairo: 1954).

chapter is devoted to the question of *ikhtilāf al maṣāḥif*.[67] Finally, the older books of *tafsīr* discuss these orthographical differences throughout the Qur'an (for example, al Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al Bayān 'an Ta'wīl āy al Qur'ān*,[68] al Zamakhsharī's *Tafsīr al Kashshāf*,[69] and al Qurṭubī's *Al Jāmi' li Aḥkām al Qur'ān*).[70]

It is agreed upon unanimously that any *qirā'ah* must conform with the orthography of one of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[71] Thus, Mālik Ibn Anas is reported to have said that anyone who reads according to personal codices not corresponding with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* should not lead prayer.[72] According to Ibn al Jazarī, the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* were written down according to the final revealed version, and the people of every city read according to their *maṣāḥif*, having been taught by Companions who themselves read according to the teachings of the Prophet. The Followers continued accordingly, using the same method as the Companions in teaching their students.[73] Ibn Shunbūdh, however, is reported to have read in ways that differed from the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. These differences were the same as those found in certain personal codices, such as that of Ibn Mas'ūd.[74] These readings of Ibn Shunbūdh were objected to by the scholars of his time, who met in Baghdad in 323 A.H. Under the chairmanship of Ibn Mujāhid and with the support of Ibn Muqlah, the 'Abbāsid *wazīr* sentenced him to be beaten and forbade him to continue.[75] Since no one is reported to have opposed this condition, agreement with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* was insisted on, to the exclusion of the personal codices of some Companions and their Followers, which were reported to have differed in certain *aḥruf* from the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[76] Thus, every reading that did not correspond to the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* was rejected and regarded as *shādhdh*, even if its *isnād* was authentic and its language was sound.[77]

The final condition, of being consistent with fluent Arabic, is apparent because the Qur'an has been revealed "in the clear Arabic language" (26:195).

67. *Muqaddimatān*, 117-33.
68. Published in 18 vols. (Cairo 1388/1968); edited by Shākir (incomplete) in 16 vols. (Cairo: 1347-89/1955-69).
69. Published in 4 vols. (Beirut, 1366/1947).
70. Published in 20 vols. in 10 (Cairo: 1966).
71. Al Nawawī, *Al Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalat al Qur'ān*, 98-99.
72. *Munjid*, 17.
73. *Nashr*, 1:7-8.
74. *Al Fihrist*, 34-35; *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 190.
75. *Al Fihrist*, 34; *Al Tibyān*, 99; *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 188-89; *Munjid*, 17.
76. For more information, see Chapter 4.
77. *Nashr*, 1:16-17.

As regards the degree of fluency in Arabic, the scholars disagreed. Some scholars objected to certain readings on the grounds that they were not in accordance with the most fluent practice.[78] In conclusion, as Ibn al Jazarī says, if a *qirā'ah* is transmitted by an authentic *isnād* and corresponds with the orthography of one of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, then it is acceptable if its language is acceptable, whether or not another reading may be more fluent.[79]

The Kinds of Readings

The readings that met the conditions for accepted readings as discussed above differed according to opinion. According to Makkī Ibn Abī al Qaysī, the readings are classified into the following categories:

1. The accepted readings that agree with the three conditions.
2. The nonaccepted readings that (a) disagree with the orthography of 'Uthmānic *masāhif* (such readings are refused, he says, for two reasons: because they are *āḥād* [isolated reports], which is not acceptable in the Qur'an, and because they contradict the consensus); (b) do not have authentic transmissions; and (c) though their transmissions are sound (but not *mutawātir*) and correspond with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, do not conform with the Arabic language.[80]

For the sake of brevity, Makkī does not give examples .

However, Ibn al Jazarī, after quoting Makkī, provides the following examples:

1. For the first kind: Two ways of reading *malik* and *mālik* in 1:4.
2. For the second kind: (a) the reading attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd, "*wa al dhakara wa al unthā*," which is in the *muṣḥaf* with addition of "*mā khalaqa*" as "*wa mā khalaqa al dhakara wa al unthā*" (92:3); (b) the reading attributed to Ibn al Sumayfi' and Abū al Simāl, "*nunaḥḥīka bi badanika li takūna li man khalafaka āyah*," while the authentic reading is "*nunajjika bi badnika li takūna li man khalfaka āyah*"; and (c) the reading attributed to Zayd and Abū Ḥātim on the authority of Ya'qūb, "*adriya aqarībun*," which should be read "*adrī aqarībun*" without *fatḥah*. This last kind, however, is rare or non-existent, according to Ibn al Jazarī, and he quotes this here only to give an example.[81]

78. This will be treated in Chapter 7.
79. *Nashr*, 1:15.
80. *Al Ibānah*, 51-52.
81. *Nashr*, 1:14-16.

Ibn al Jazarī divides the authentic readings into the following categories:

1. Authentic readings that are consistent with all three conditions required for the accepted reading.
2. Nonauthentic readings that do not meet one of the conditions.[82]

He elsewhere divides them into three categories. The first is the famous (*mashhūr*) that are accepted by all people, such as the readings of the accepted narrators and certain reliable books of *qirā'āt*. An example of the ways in which *mashhūr* readings vary is in their treatment of *madd* (prolongation). According to Ibn al Jazarī, the variations in *madd* date back to the seven *aḥruf* revealed to the Prophet, as do all the variations in accepted readings, which all have the status of successive readings (*qirā'āt mutawātirah*).[83] He interprets *mutawātir* as that which is transmitted by a group of people (without a fixed number of narrators), narrating on the authority of another group to the end of the chain. He adds that *mutawātir*, thus defined, gives knowledge.[84]

The second category is that which is not accepted by the people and is not famous (*mashhūr*).[85] The third category is that which has a sound chain and is consistent with Arabic but does not correspond with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. This category is called *shādhdh*, because it differs from the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[86]

Al 'Asqalānī divides the readings into three categories:

1. The readings that correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, but are transmitted with strange *isnāds*. He regards these as similar to the above.
2. The readings that differ from or do not correspond with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. He says that this kind is not regarded as Qur'an.
3. The readings that correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and are transmitted in *mashhūr isnāds* and accepted by the scholars generation after generation. This kind of reading is, according to him, acceptable. He cites the readings of Ya'qūb and Abū Ja'far as examples.[87]

Al Qasṭallānī classifies the readings into the following categories:

82. *Ibid.*, 1:15.
83. *Munjid*, 16-17.
84. *Ibid.*, 15.
85. *Ibid.*, 16-17.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 9:32.

1. The readings that are agreed to be successive readings.
2. The readings about whose successiveness opinions differ.
3. The readings that are agreed to be anomalous (*shādhdh*).[88]

According to Jalāl al Dīn al Bulqīnī (824/1421), the readings are divided into three categories:

1. *Mutawātir,* which are the seven prominent readings.
2. *Āḥād,* which are the readings of the three *Qurrā'* completing the ten. In addition, the readings attributed to the Companions are regarded as the same as *āḥād.*
3. *Shādhdh,* being the readings of the Followers, such as al A'mash, Yaḥyā Ibn Waththāb, Ibn Jubayr, and the like.[89]

Al Suyūṭī, in agreement with Ibn al Jazarī, objects to this view of al Bulqīnī on the grounds that acceptability of a *qirā'ah* should be subject only to the three conditions for an accepted reading.[90]

In conclusion, al Suyūṭī classifies the kinds of acceptable readings in greater detail and defines each kind as follows:

1. *Mutawātir,* which is narrated by a group on the authority of another to the end of chain, and for whom it would be impossible to agree on something false. The example of this kind is what all narrators on the authority of the seven readers agree upon transmitting for them. The greater part of all readings is in this category.
2. *Mashhūr,* which is narrated with a sound chain, but is not *mutawātir,* with the condition that it should correspond to one of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and be consistent with the Arabic language. An example of this is where the readings of the seven *Qurrā'* vary. Al Suyūṭī asserts that only these kinds are permissible in reading the Qur'an and that they should be accepted without any doubt.
3. *Āḥād,* which are narrated with a sound *isnād* but are not consistent with the Arabic language or the orthography of the *maṣāḥif.* Readings of this kind are *āḥad* even if their *isnād* is *mashhūr.* This kind is not accepted and it is not permissible to read the Qur'an according to it. An example of this is found in al Ḥākim's *Mustadrak,* where he reports on the authority of the Prophet the reading of *rafārif,* which is found in the *muṣḥaf* as *rafraf*; and the reading *qurrāt,* which in the *muṣḥaf* is *qurrat* (32:17).

88. *Laṭā'if,* 1:170.
89. *Itqān,* 1:210.
90. *Ibid.*

4. *Shādhdh*, that which has no sound chain; for example, the reading of *malaka* and *yu'badu*, which, according to accepted readings are *maliki* and *na'budu* (1:4-5).
5. *Mawḍū'*, that which has no origin or is fabricated, such as the readings compiled by al Khuzā'ī, which were attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah; for example, *yaksha Allāhu min 'ibādihī al 'ulamā'a*, where the authentic reading is *yakhshā Allāha min 'ibādihī al 'ulamā'u* (35:28).
6. *Mudraj*, which is similar to *al ḥadīth al mudraj* (what is added to the text of the Qur'an as *tafsīr*); for example, the reading attributed to Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, with the addition of *min umm* after *wa lahū akhun aw ukhtun* (4:12) and the reading attributed to Ibn 'Abbās with the addition of *fī mawāsim al ḥajj* to *laysa 'alaykum junāḥun an tabtaghū faḍlan min Rabbikum* (2:197).[91]

The Successive and Anomalous Readings

The scholars agree on the successiveness of the seven distinguished readings of the *amṣār*, which were compiled by Ibn Mujāhid in his *Kitāb al Sab'ah*. Thus, the readings were accepted and canonized by the consensus of the scholars with their fourteen versions.[92] Many books were composed by prominent philologists in support of *Al Sab'ah* in their phonetical aspects and linguistic features.[93] Ibn Mujāhid regards those readings that are not found in his *Al Sab'ah* as *shādhdh*. His view was adopted by a group of scholars,[94] although others, while they agree with Ibn Mujāhid on the successiveness of his *Al Sab'ah*, add the three readings of Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, and Khalaf. Thus, according to this view, the successive readings are ten.[95] In this connection, many books were composed on the readings of eight, nine, or ten *Qurrā'*, adding one or more to Ibn Mujāhid's list.[96] Ibn al Jazarī strongly supports this view and states that the ten readings have been accepted by the *salaf* and their descendants, because no objections have been reported from them. Thus, according to Ibn al Jazarī, the ten readings were accepted by the people unanimously. He studies the chains (*asānīd*) of the three additional readings to prove that they have the same status as the seven successive readings. In support of his view, he quotes Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Ḥayyān to the effect that the seven readings differ from

91. *Ibid.*, 1:215-16.
92. *Laṭa'if al Ishārāt*, 1:170; *Al Baḥr*, 2:324.
93. Abū 'Alī al Fārisī, *Al Ḥujjah*, edited by al Najdī et al., 1st ed. (Cairo: 1966); Ibn Khālawayh, *Al Ḥujjah*, edited by Mukarram, 2nd ed. (Beirut: 1977).
94. Ibn Khaldūn, *Al Muqaddimah*, 479.
95. *Nashr*, 1:38-43; *Munjid*, 15-16.
96. *Nashr*, 1:43, 58-59.

the seven *aḥruf* and were introduced by Ibn Mujāhid in the fourth century. Prior to that time, the ten readings were known in the *amṣār* and accepted by the people. In addition, according to Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Ḥayyān, the ten readings are successive, but if certain people do not know them all, they should not reject what they do not know.[97] Moreover, Ibn al Jazarī lists the names of some prominent *Qurrā'* from the time of Ibn Mujāhid in the fourth century until his own time in the ninth century.[98] In conclusion, he asserts that the ten readings are equally successive without exception.[99]

Finally, Ibn al Jazarī devotes the fifth chapter of his *Munjid al Muqri'īn* to quotations from scholars supporting his view, referring to al Baghawī, Ibn Taymiyyah, and al Ja'burī.[100]

According to Ibn al Ḥājib, the seven readings are successive except in some styles of pronunciation, like *madd* and *imālah.*[101] Ibn Khaldūn opts for this view, approving the successiveness of only the seven readings.[102] The scholars rejected this view on grounds that the seven readings were transmitted from the *salaf* with all their *asānīd*, orthography, and linguistic aspects, including phonetics and ways of pronunciation. In regard to *madd,* for example, the *Qurrā'* agreed unanimously on the existence of prolongation and differed only concerning the degree of *madd.*[103]

Abu Shāmah regards the seven readings as successive when they agree with each other. Thus, when they differ they are not successive.[104] However, Ibn al Jazarī objects to this view as contradicting the view of the majority. In support of this view, he states that each of the seven readings was transmitted in a successive chain and that what Ibn Mujāhid has done is only to select two *Ruwāt* from among many for each reading.[105]

Furthermore, according to Ibn al Jazarī the ten readings are all successive in agreeing or disagreeing with each other and concerning all their aspects.[106]

Many books have been written in support of the ten readings. The first author known as having composed a book on them was al Khuzā'ī (d. 408/1017), who wrote *Al Muntahā fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr.*[107] He was followed by Abū 'Alī al Mālikī (d. 438/1046), who wrote *Kitāb al Rawḍah fī*

97. *Ibid.,* 28-29; c.f. *Fatāwā,* 13: 390-94.
98. *Munjid,* 29-45.
99. *Ibid.,* 45-46.
100. *Ibid.,* 46-49.
101. *Ibid.,* 57.
102. *Muqaddimah,* 479.
103. *Munjid,* 57-62; *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:78-79.
104. *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 177; *Munjid,* 63.
105. *Munjid,* 62-67.
106. *Ibid.,* 54.
107. *Nashr,* 1:93; *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:86.

al Qirā'āt al Iḥdā 'Asharah (the ten readings and the reading of al A'mash).[108] Then came Abū Naṣr al Baghdādī (d. 442/1050), *Al Mufīd fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[109] Ibn Shīṭā (d. 443/1051), *Al Tidhkār fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[110] Ibn Fāris (d. 450/1058), *Al Jāmi' fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[111] Abū al Ḥasan al Fārisī (d. 461/1068), *Kitāb al Jāmi' fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[112] Ibn Jubārah al Maghribī (d. 465/1072), *Al Kāmil fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr wa al Arba'ah al Zā'idah 'Alayha*;[113] Ibn Suwār (d. 496/1102), *Kitāb al Mustanīr fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[114] Abū 'Alī al Khayyāṭ, (d. 499/1106), *Kitāb al Muhadhdhab fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[115] Abū al 'Izz al Qalānisī al Wāsiṭī (d. 521/1127), *Kitāb Irshād al Mubtadi' wa Tadhkirat al Muntahī fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[116] Ibn Khayrūn (d. 539/1144), *Kitāb al Mūḍiḥ fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr* and *Al Miftāḥ fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[117] al Shahrazūrī (d. 550/1155), *Kitāb al Miṣbāḥ fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[118] al Wāsiṭī (d. 740/1339), *Al Kanz fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr* and *Al Kifāyah fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[119] Ibn al Jundī (d. 769/1367), *Kitāb al Bustān fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[120] Sibṭ al Khayyāṭ (d. 541/1146), *Irādat al Ṭālib fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[121] Abū Naṣr Manṣūr Ibn Aḥmad al 'Irāqī (d. after 420/1029), *Al Ishārah fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*;[122] and Ibn al Jazarī (d. 833/1429), *Al Nashr fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*,[123] *Taqrīb al Nashr fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*,[124] *Taḥbīr al Taysīr fī Qirā'āt al A'immah al 'Asharah*,[125] and *Ṭayyibat al Nashr fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*.[126]

In support of eight readings, books have composed by Ibn Ghalbūn (d. 399/1008), *Al Tadhkirah fī al Qirā'āt al Thamān*;[127] Abū Ma'shar (d. 448/1056), *Kitāb al Talkhīṣ fī al Qirā'āt al Thamān*;[128] Abū 'Abd Allāh al Ḥaḍramī (d. 560/1164), *Kitāb al Mufīd fī al Qirā'āt al Thamān* (an

108. *Nashr*, 1:74.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*, 84.
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*, 75.
113. *Ibid.*, 91.
114. *Ibid.*, 82.
115. *Ibid.*, 84.
116. *Ibid.*, 86.
117. *Ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*, 93.
119. *Ibid.*, 94.
120. *Ibid.*, 97.
121. *Nashr*, 1:84.
122. *Ibid.*, 93.
123. Edited by al Ḍabbā', 2 vols. (Beirut: n.d.).
124. Edited by Ibrāhīm 'Aṭwah 'Awad, 1st ed. (Cairo: 1381/1961).
125. Edited by al Qāḍī and Qamḥāwī, 1st ed. (Cairo: 1393/1973).
126. Editd by al Ḍabbā', included in *Itḥāf al Barārah bi al Mutūn al 'Asharah* (Cairo: 1354/1935).
127. *Nashr*, 1:73.
128. *Ibid.*, 77.

abridgement of *Kitāb al Talkhīṣ of Abū Ma'shar* [mentioned above]);[129] and Sibṭ al Khayyāṭ (d. 541/1146), *Al Mubhij fī al Qirā'āt al Thamān*. In addition to them are the readings of Ibn Muḥayṣin, al A'mash, Khalaf, and al Yazīdī.[130]

Finally, certain scholars devoted their books to the readings of the three additional *Qurrā'* or only one of them; for example, al Dānī (d. 444/1052), *Mufradat Ya'qūb;*[131] Ibn al Faḥḥām (d. 516/1122), *Mufradat Ya'qūb;*[132] Abū Muḥammad al Ṣa'īdī (d. after 650/1212), *Mufradat Ya'qūb;*[133] and Ibn al Jazarī (d. 833/1429), *Al Durrah al Mutammimah fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr*[134] (being the readings of Abū Ja'far, Ya'qūb, and Khalaf, *Sharḥ al Samnūdī 'alā Matn al Durrah al Mutammimah fī al Qirā'āt al 'Ashr).*[135]

Definition of *Shādhdh*

According to Ibn al Ṣalāḥ, and later Abū Shāmah and Ibn al Jazarī, *shādhdh* is a reading that has been narrated as Qur'an without a successive transmission or at least a famous (*mashhūr*) transmission accepted by the people. He refers to the material contained in Ibn Jinnī's *Al Muḥtasib fī Tabyīn Wujūh Shawādhdh al Qirā'āt wa al Īḍāḥ 'anhā*[136] as an example.[137]

According to Makkī and Ibn al Jazarī, *shādhdh* is a reading that contradicts the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* or the Arabic although it might be authentic in its chain. Alternatively, it has been transmitted in an unauthentic chain, although it corresponds with the orthography and fluent Arabic.

Another alternative is that it corresponds with the three conditions, but it is not well-known (*mashhūr*), and was not accepted by the people.[138] However, according to most scholars, *shādhdh* is the reading that is not transmitted in a successive manner.[139]

Thus, al Qasṭallānī states that *shādhdh* is not regarded as Qur'an because it lacks the condition of *tawātur*. To support this view, he quoted *Uṣūlīs, Fuqahā'*, and other scholars and referred to al Ghazzālī, Ibn al

129. *Ibid.*, 93.
130. *Ibid.*, 83.
131. *Ibid.*, 60.
132. *Ibid.*, 1:75-77.
133. *Ibid.*, 98.
134. Edited by al Qāḍī and Qamhāwī, 1st ed. (Cairo and Aleppo: 1393/1973).
135. Edited by al Ḍabbā' (Cairo: n.d.).
136. Edited by Nāṣif et. al, 2 vols. (Cairo: 1386-89/1966-69).
137. *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 184; *Munjid*, 18.
138. Al Qāḍī, *Al Qirā'āt al Shādhdhah*, 10; see p. 128 above.
139. *Ibid.*

Ḥājib, al Qāḍī 'Aḍud al Dīn, al Nawawī, al Sakhāwī, and most scholars as objecting to *shādhdh* readings.[140]

Al Nawawī is reported to have said that it is not permitted to read *shādhdh* in or outside prayers. Moreover, Ibn 'Abd al Barr is reported to have stated that the scholars agreed unanimously in rejecting *shādhdh* readings.[141] Al Qasṭallānī refers to al Adhru'ī, al Zarkashī, al Asnawī, al Nasa'ī, al Tirmidhī, and al 'Asqalānī as having forbidden reading with *shādhdh.*[142]

Furthermore, al Sakhāwī is quoted by his pupil Abū Shāmah, with his approval, as having said that it is forbidden to read the Qur'an with *shādhdh* readings, because they contradict the consensus of the Muslims and the *tawātur.*[143]

As regards use of the anomalous readings, al Ṣafāqisī quotes al Nuwayrī as having allowed the use of *shādhdh* in the interpretation of the Qur'an for linguistic purposes and also its use as a source to substantiate arguments in Islamic law, although this is only according to a certain group of jurisprudents, since most scholars disagree with this opinion. According to al Nuwayrī, the earlier scholars who were reported to have read with *shādhdh* must have read it only for the two purposes mentioned above, but never as Qur'an.[144]

How does one distinguish *shādhdh*? To answer this question, Ibn al Jazarī states that the books composed on *qirā'āt* are divided into two categories according to their authors:

1. Those who compiled the accepted readings and whose readings the people agree with unanimously, like the two books entitled *Al Ghāyah* of Ibn Marhān and al Hamadānī, Ibn Mujāhid's *Al Sab'ah,* al Qalānisī's *Irshād al Mubtadi'*, al Dānī's *Al Taysīr,* al Ahwāzī's *Mūjaz,* Makkī's *Al Tabṣirah,* Ibn Shurayḥ's *Al Kāfī,* Abū Ma'shar al Ṭabarī's *Al Talkhīs,* al Ṣafrāwī's *Al I'lān,* Ibn al Faḥḥām's *Al Tajrīd,* and al Shāṭibī's *Ḥirz al Amānī.*
2. Those who compiled books or readings that they received, irrespective of whether the readings were successive or anomalous, like the books of Sibṭ al Khayyāṭ, Abū Ma'shar, al Hadhalī, Shan-razūrī, Abū 'Alī al Mālikī, Ibn Fāris, and Abū 'Alī al Ahwāzī.[145]

Ibn al Jazarī elsewhere attributes to certain unnamed scholars the practice of accepting *shādhdh* readings that were attributed to the personal codices of some Companions and their Followers. He states that most

140. *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:72-73.
141. *Ibid.,* 73.
142. *Ibid.,* 74.
143. *Al Murshid al Wajīz,* 181-82.
144. *Ghayth al Naf',* 7.
145. *Munjid,* 18-19.

scholars object to *shādhdh* readings on the grounds that they are not *mutawātir* and that, even if they were authentic in transmission, they are abrogated by the final revised version or by the consensus of the Companions on the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[146]

Development of the Concept of *Shādhdh*

After the compilation of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*, the readings differing from the 'Uthmānic ones were regarded as *shādhdh*. Thus, to be deemed authentic, readings had to correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. Accordingly, the readings contradicting the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* were abandoned and destroyed.

The first development was that Ibn Mujāhid, after introducing his *Al Sab'ah*, regarded the other readings rather than his *Al Sab'ah* as *shādhdh*. At this stage, Ibn Jinnī composed his book *Al Muḥtasib* and Ibn Khālawayh wrote his books *Al Badī'* and *Al Mukhtaṣar*. They both regarded the other readings not included in the seven readings compiled by Ibn Mujāhid as *shādhdh*. Ibn Jinnī regards *shādhdh* as the readings that were not included in Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al Sab'ah*.[147] He reports that the people of his time described them as *shadhdh*.[148] Accordingly, the term *shādhdh* here does not necessarily mean that which is linguistically anomalous or *lughah shādhdhah*.[149]

The next step was the introduction of the three conditions for the accepted readings as a result of which any reading that omits one of the three conditions is regarded as *shādhdh*. This had the effect of accommodating the other three readings while four readings over the ten readings were finally regarded as *shādhdh*. These four anomalous readings are as follows:

The *Qāri'*	**His district**	**First *Rāwī***	**Second *Rāwī***
Al Ḥasan al Baṣrī (d. 21/614)	Basrah	Shujā' (190/805)	Al Dūrī (246/860)
Ibn Muḥayṣin (d. 123/740)	Makkah	Al Bazzī (250/864)	Ibn Shunbūdh (328/939)
Al A'mash (d. 148/765)	Kūfah	Al Shunbūdhī (388/998)	Al Muṭawwi'ī (371/981)
Yaḥyā al Yazīdī (d. 202/817)	Baghdād	Sulaymān Ibn al Ḥakam (235/849)	Aḥmad Ibn Faraḥ (303/915)[150]

146. *Nashr*, 1:14-15.
147. *Al Muḥtasib*, 1:32.
148. *Ibid.*, 32-33.
149. *Ibid.*
150. *Al Qirā'āt al Shādhdhah*.

These four readings are included al Bannā' al Dimyāṭī's *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al Bashar bi al Qirā'āt al Araba'ata 'Ashar.*[151]

The Relationship Between the *Qirā'āt* and the Qur'an

Al Zarkashī, followed by al Qasṭallānī and al Banna', differentiates between the Qur'an and the *qirā'āt*. According to him, the Qur'an is the revelation miraculously revealed to the Prophet, while the *qirā'āt* are the orthographical, phonetical, and linguistical variations in the readings of the Qur'an.[152]

In fact, no major difference exists between the authentic readings and the Qur'an, and the relation between them is that of the parts to the whole.

Although there is an overlapping and close connection between the Qur'an and the *qirā'āt,* this does not unite and make them the same. Thus, the difference between them remains distinguishable.

Ibn al Jazarī does not compare the definitions of Qur'an and the *qirā'āt,* but opts for al Zarkashī's definition of the *qirā'āt.* He states that *qirā'āt* is the science of knowing the agreement of the transmitters, how they differ in the transmission of the Qur'an in regards to *lughah* and *i'rāb,* and the orthographical differences between the *maṣāḥif.*[153]

The Compilation of the *Qirā'āt* and the Earliest Compilers

The first step in the collection of the *qirā'āt* was that certain scholars started collecting *qirā'āt* and composing books on them, without restricting themselves to a fixed number of *qirā'āt.* The first scholar known to have composed a book on *qirā'āt* is Yaḥyā Ibn Ya'mur (d. 129/746), who is reported to have written a book according to the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif.*[154] Next, Yaq'ūb Ibn Isḥāq al Ḥaḍramī (d. 205/ 820) composed a book on *qirā'āt* called *Al Jā'mi.*[155]

According to Ibn al Jazarī, the first author on the subject is Abū 'Ubayd al Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 224/838). His book is reported to have included twenty-five readings.[156] He was followed by many other scholars

151. Edited by al Ḍabbā' (Cairo: 1359).
152. *Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān,* 1:318; *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt,* 1:170-71; *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al Bashar,* 5.
153. *Munjid,* 3.
154. *Qurṭubī,* 1:63.
155. Al Zabīdī, *Ṭabaqāt al Lughawiyyīn wa al Naḥwiyyīn,* 51.
156. *Nashr,* 1:34; *Laṭā'if,* 1:85.

who composed books on the *qirā'āt* of the cities. Aḥmad Ibn Jubayr al Kūfi (d. 258/871) is reported to have written a book on the readings of the five cities, selecting a *Qāri'* from each city. This was followed by the book of Isma'īl Ibn Isḥāq al Mālikī (d. 282/895), which is said to have contained readings of twenty *Qurrā'*. After this came al Ṭabarī (d. 310/922), whose book on *qirā'āt* is reported to have contained more than twenty readings, and al Dājūnī (d. 324/935), which is reported to have included eleven readings. They were followed by Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/935), the first scholar known to have introduced the seven *Qurrā'* and to have selected them from the five cities of Madīnah, Makkah, Kūfah, Baṣrah, and Shām (Damascus).[157] His book is entitled *Kitāb al Sab'ah*.[158] The *Qurrā'* whose readings Ibn Mujāhid compiled are the following:

The *Qāri'*	**His District**
Nāfi' (d. 169/785)	Madīnah
Ibn Kathīr (d. 120/737)	Makkah
Ibn 'Āmir (d. 118/736)	Damascus
Abū 'Amr (d. 154/770)	Baṣrah
'Āṣim (d. 128/744)	Kūfah
Ḥamzah (d. 156/772)	Kūfah
Al Kisā'ī (d. 189/804)	Kūfah

Ibn Mujāhid's work was criticized by certain scholars of his time on the grounds that it had confused the masses about the relationship of the seven *aḥruf* to the seven canonical readings.[159] Accordingly, to alleviate this confusion, certain scholars are reported to have composed books on the *qirā'āt* of only one *Qāri'* or eight or ten *Qurrā'*.[160]

In support of Ibn Mujāhid's book, his pupil Abū Ṭāhir Ibn Abī Hāshim states that people misunderstood Ibn Mujāhid, who was far too intelligent to confuse the seven *aḥruf* and the seven readings.[161] Furthermore, it is argued that he selected seven readings simply because he wanted this number to agree with the number seven that occurs with regard to the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*.[162] Ibn Mujāhid mentions in his introduction that he selected these seven *Qurrā'* based on the evaluation of the men rather than their *qirā'āt*.[163]

157. *Laṭā'if*, 1:85-86; *Nashr*, 2:33-34.
158. Edited by Shawqī Ḍayf (Cairo: 1972).
159. *Nashr*, 1:36-37; *Munjid*, 70-71.
160. *Nashr*, 43-44.
161. *Munjid*, 72-73.
162. *Laṭā'if*, 1:86.
163. *Kitāb al Sab'ah*, 45-46.

Although the *Ruwāt* of his *Al Sab'ah* were numerous, Ibn Mujāhid selected only two or three *Ruwāt* for each *Qāri'*. He reduced them to facilitate readings by choosing the two most prominent among the *Ruwāt*. According to him, the following *Ruwāt* were the most knowledgeable and reliable:

The *Qāri'*	**His First Rāwī**	**His Second Rāwī**
Nāfi'	Qālūn (d. 220/835)	Warsh (d. 197/812)
Ibn Kathīr	Al Bazzī (d. 250/854)	Qunbul (d. 291/903)
Ibn 'Āmir	Hishām (d. 245/859)	Ibn Dhakwān (d. 42/856)
Abū 'Amr	Al Dūrī (d. 246/860)	Al Sūsī (d. 261/874)
'Āṣim	Shu'bah (d. 193/809)	Ḥafṣ (d. 180/805)
Ḥamzah	Khalaf (d. 229/843)	Khallād (d. 220/835)
Al Kisā'ī	Abū al Ḥārith (d. 240/864)	Al Dūrī (d. 246/860)[164]

Ibn Mujāhid's work was adopted and revived among his Followers, such as Makkī Ibn Abī Ṭālib al Qaysī, who wrote *Al Tabṣirah fī al Qirā'āt al Sab'*[165] and *Al Kashf 'an Wujūh al Qirā'āt al Sab'*,[166] and al Dānī, whose book *Al Taysīr* was adopted and followed by the scholars and has become the standard work for students of the seven readings in their fourteen versions.

Ibn Mujāhid regards the readings other than his *al Sab'ah* as *shādhdh*.[167] This view was rejected by certain scholars on the grounds that many *Qurrā'* were claimed to be equal in status to his *Al Sab'ah* or even greater (such as Abū Ja'far of Madīnah (d. 128/747), the teacher of Nāfi', whom Ibn Mujāhid himself mentioned in his introduction as a learned and respected *Qāri'*). Furthermore, Yaq'ūb al Ḥaḍramī of Baṣrah (d. 205/820) was one of Ibn Mujāhid's own *al Sab'ah* before he replaced him with al Kisā'ī. The reading of Khalaf al Baghdādī (d. 229/843), in addition to these two, has been argued to be as authentic as the *al Sab'ah* of Ibn Mujāhid. Thus, according to this view, the successive readings are ten, these three latter readings being added to the seven of Ibn Mujāhid.[168]

However, according to certain other scholars, some or all readings of the following *Qurrā'* are argued to be authentic and accepted: Ibn Muḥayṣin (d. 123/740) of Makkah, Al Yazīdī (d. 202/817) of Baṣrah, Al Ḥasan al Baṣrī (d. 110/720) of Baṣrah, and Al A'mash (d. 148/765) of Kūfah.

164. *Ibid; Al Budūr al Zāhirah*, 8-9.
165. Edited by al Nadawī (India: 1983).
166. Edited by Ramaḍān, 2 vols. (Damascus: 1974).
167. *Al Muḥtasib*, 1:32-33.
168. *Munjid*, 15; *Nashr*, 1:36-36.

To support this view, it is pointed out that the acceptability of a reading should be subject only to the conditions for the accepted readings, and that the transmission of some or all these readings is authentic according to certain districts or people who received it in the manner of *tawātur*.[169] However, al Qasṭallānī asserts that the readings that were agreed to be *qirā'āt shādhdhah* are these remaining four after the ten.[170] Moreover, according to Ibn al Ṣalāḥ, Abū Naṣr al Subkī and his son Abū al Ḥasan, and al Baghawī, all readings over the existing ten readings are anomalous (*shādhdh*).[171]

In conclusion, we may say that variations in readings have existed since the Prophet's lifetime and that all who differed in reading referred to the fact that they had been taught by the Prophet in this way. The Successors followed the Companions in this practice, and among them certain distinguished *Qurrā'* were sent to different cities to teach the people the Qur'an. The number of the *Qurrā'* increased, and some became famous and devoted themselves to the *qirā'āt*. Hence, the readings are attributed to them. Eventually the seven highly esteemed readings dominated and were canonized by the selection of Ibn Mujāhid, although an additional three readings are argued to have the same position as the seven of Ibn Mujāhid. The successive readings have been studied, together with the definition of *shādhdh* and its development. Thus, we find that the acceptability of readings is subject to the conditions ruling them. It is confirmed that the seven readings differ entirely from the seven *aḥruf*, since the first compilers and books on the subject collected an unlimited number of readings. It is emphasized that *riwāyah* is the most important condition for acceptability of any reading, and that any reading that does not correspond with *riwāyah* or the other two conditions (agreement with the *maṣāḥif* and the Arabic language) is regarded as *shādhdh*, obscure, or unacceptable.

169. Ibn Taymiyya, *Fatāwa*, 13:392-93; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al Qirā'āt al Mashhūrah*, 269-71; *Nashr*, 1:39.
170. *Laṭā'if*, 1:77, 170.
171. *Munjid*, 16.

CHAPTER 7

Ikhtiyār in the *Qirā'āt* and Its Bases

Ikhtiyār refers to the selection by certain qualified scholars of one or more readings from among a number of readings; *ikhtiyār* is based on the most authentic and fluent ways of reading in their judgment.[1] It is reported that the choice of the *Qurrā'* of certain *qirā'āt* is based on the three conditions for accepted readings: fluency of Arabic, correspondence with the *maṣāḥif*, and agreement of the *'āmmah* on accepting them.[2] The term *'āmmah* is interpreted as meaning either the people of Madīnah and Kūfah, this being a strong reason for *ikhtiyār*, or the people of Makkah and Madīnah.[3]

In discussing the attribution of *qirā'āt* to the *Qurrā'*, Ibn al Jazarī states that they selected certain readings and preferred them in their own readings and teaching of their students. This *ikhtiyār* is exercised only in respect to selection from existing readings, and never extends to inventions or their own composition.[4] In this connection, the word *ikhtiyār* occurs frequently in the books of *qirā'āt*, for example:

1. "The *ikhtiyār* of Yaq'ūb is followed by the common [people] of Baṣrah."[5]
2. "The people agreed upon their *ikhtiyār*" (i.e., the *Qurrā'* of the ten readings).[6]
3. "In this book I have mentioned the readings of distinguished *Qurrā'* who were famous by their *qirā'āt* and *ikhtiyārāt*."[7]

1. *Al Tibyān*, p. 99.
2. See Chapter 6, 119-125.
3. *Al Murshid al Wajīz*, 172; *Al Ibānah*, 89.
4. *Nashr*, 1:51.
5. *Ghāyat al Nihāyah*, 2:43.
6. *Nashr*, 1:37.
7. *Ibid.*

4. Ibn Khālawayh in the work attributed to him, *Al Ḥujjah fī al Qirā'āt al Sab'*,[8] mentions that the seven *Qurrā'* based their *ikhtiyār* on the *āthār* (traditions).[9]

No doubt exists as to how essential it is to depend on the *āthār* for any *ikhtiyār* in the *qirā'āt*, nor that it is not left to individual discretion to adopt or select readings that are not subject to the conditions for accepted readings mentioned above. Accordingly, any reading that does not conform to these conditions is rejected and regarded as *shādhdh*.[10]

The next step after *ikhtiyār* and the compilation of the *qirā'āt* was that certain scholars started composing books to establish the authenticity of selected readings on the basis of transmission, correspondence with the *maṣāḥif*, and fluency of Arabic (bearing in mind that the philologists differed concerning the degree of fluency required for accepted or preferred readings). Accordingly, the *Qurrā'* and the philologists had differing views, and hence their *ikhtiyār* differed. The first author known to have composed a book on this subject is al Mubarrid (d. 285/898), who wrote *Kitāb Iḥtijāj al Qirā'āt*.[11] He was followed by Abū Bakr Ibn al Sarrāj (d. 316/928), author of *Kitāb Iḥtijāj al Qirā'ah*;[12] Ibn Darastuwayh (died after 330), author of *Kitāb al Iḥtijāj li al Qurrā'*;[13] and Ibn Miqsam (d. 332/943), author of several books on *qirā'āt*, *Kitāb Iḥtijāj al Qirā'āt*, *Kitāb al Sab'ah bi 'Ilalihā al Kabīr*, *Kitāb al Sab'ah al Awsaṭ*, and *Kitāb al Sab'ah al Saghīr* known as *Shifā' al Ṣudūr*;[14] Abū Ṭāhir 'Abd al Wāḥid al Bazzār (d. 349/960), a pupil of Ibn Mujāhid and author of *Kitāb al Intiṣar li Ḥamzah*;[15] Muḥammad Ibn al Ḥasan al Anṣārī (d. 351/ 962), to whom is attributed *Kitāb al Sab'ah bi 'Ilalihā al Kabīr*;[16] Ibn Khālawayh (d. 370/980), to whom is attributed *Kitāb al Ḥujjah fī al Qirā'āt al Sab'*;[17] Abū 'Alī al Fārisī, the author of a large book in support of his teacher Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al Sab'ah* entitled *Kitāb al Ḥujjah li al Qurrā' al Sab'ah*;[18] Abū Zar'ah 'Abd al Raḥmān Ibn Muḥam-

8. Edited by Mukarram, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al Shurūq, 1397/1977).
9. *Ibid.*, 62.
10. See Chapter 6.
11. *Al Fihrist*, 65.
12. *Ibid.*, 86.
13. *Ibid.*, 38, 68-69.
14. *Ibid.*, 35-36.
15. *Ibid.*, 35.
16. *Ibid.*, 50.
17. Edited by Mukarram, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1397/1977). The authenticity of this attribution to Ibn Khālawayh is disputed; see Muḥammad al 'Ābid al Fāsī, "Nisbat al Ḥujjah ilā Ibn Khālawayh La Taṣiḥḥ," *Majallat al Lisān al 'Arabī* 8, 1:5, 21; al Afghānī, (ed.), *Ḥujjat al Qirā'āt*, 24.
18. *Al Fihrist*, 69. This book of Ibn Fāris is edited by al Najjār et al., vol. 1, 1st ed. (Cairo: 1966).

mad Ibn Zanjalah (one of al Fārisī's students), whose *Ḥujjatu al Qirā'āt*[19] was composed before 403/1012;[20] and Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn Idrīs, whose *al Mukhtār fī Ma'ānī Qirā'āt Ahl al Amṣār* includes the reading of Yaq'ūb al Ḥaḍramī in addition to the seven of Ibn Mujāhid.[21]

In the fifth century, we find Makkī's (d. 437/1080) book *al Kashf 'an Wujūh al Qirā'āt al Sab' wa 'Ilalihā wa Ḥujajihā.*[22]

Refutation of Free Exercise of Choice in Selection of Readings

Ibn al Bāqillānī is concerned that certain people might misinterpret the differences among the *Qurrā'* as meaning that they were free to choose whatever way of reading they desired. He asserts that this view is groundless and that it is agreed unanimously that no single reading should be accepted unless it has been transmitted with authentic chains. The condition of *riwāyah,* he says, is most essential and obvious from the practice of all *Qurrā'* of the Qur'an, since they did not react immediately by rejecting any reading they heard from each other for the first time, fearing that it might be authentic and based on the *riwāyah* according to the other readers. In this connection, al A'mash is reported as having said that when he read in a different way from what he had been taught by his teacher, Ibrāhīm al Nakha'ī, the latter would not say, "It is wrong" but, "Read so and so."[23]

Ibn al Bāqallānī comments that since this was the practice of the *salaf,* it is unlikely that the *Qurrā'* would allow the Qur'an to be read without fulfillment of the condition of *riwāyah.*[24] In support of the condition of *riwāyah,* we find many statements attibuted to distinguished and famous *Qurrā'* of the Qur'an, among whom we may quote the following:

1. Nāfi' is reported to have said that he had been taught the Qur'an from seventy *Qurrā'* among the Followers and that he based his *ikhtiyār* on the agreement of two of them.[25]
2. Ibn Mujāhid states that Nāfi' was following the *āthār* of the *Qurrā'* before him.[26]
3. Sufyān al Thawrī is reported to have supported the reading of Ḥamzah on the grounds that "he had not read a single *ḥarf* of the Qur'an with-

19. Edited by Sa'īd al Afghānī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: 1399/1979).
20. *Ibid.*, 30, 39.
21. *Ibid.*, 22
22. Edited by Ramaḍān, 2 vols. (Damascus: 1394/1974).
23. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 415.
24. *Ibid.*, 416.
25. Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al Sab'ah*, 62.
26. *Ibid.*, 54.

out depending on *āthār*."[27]

4. Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā' is reported to have said that if he had been free to read in certain ways as he desired, he would have read so and so.[28]
5. Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā' is also reported as having been asked, concerning his own reading and *ikhtiyār*, whether he had heard it all from the *salaf*. He replied that if he had not heard it, he would not have read it, because reading of the Qur'an should be according to the sunnah (i.e., *riwāyah*).[29]

Accordingly, Ibn al Bāqillānī states that it is forbidden to read in a way not corresponding with *riwāyah*.[30]

As regards the grounds on which the *Qurrā'* support their *ikhtiyār*, using grammatical and other evidence, Ibn al Bāqillānī says that the *Qurrā'* who substantiate their own readings all agree that they have been transmitted from the Prophet himself and that there is no objection to adding to the evidence of *riwāyah* other logical evidence in support of *riwāyah*. No one among the *Qurrā'* is doing more than supporting his *ikhtiyār*, explaining why he selects this reading but not rejecting or refuting the readings of other *Qurrā'*. Ibn al Bāqillānī only says in support of his own *ikhtiyār* that this way is the most fluent in Arabic and more beautiful than the others.[31]

Furthermore, al Qasṭallānī states that preference for certain readings is based only on conformance with the most eloquent and best known ways in the Arabic language, since they are all authentic and accepted readings.[32] Hence, linguistic evidence in support of the *qirā'āt* is used only to substantiate the reason for choosing or selecting this way of reading, but never as the sole reason for *ikhtiyār*. In this connection, Ibn al Munayyir disagrees with al Zamakhsharī, who thought that the seven distinguished *Qurrā'* had exercised their *ikhtiyār* as if they were free from the condition of *riwāyah*.[33] The right of using *ikhtiyār* among the various authentic readings is still permissible among the scholars, provided that it is according to the *riwāyah* and used by qualified and authorized *Qurrā'*.[34]

The right of *ikhtiyār* is restricted to use only in accordance with *riwāyah*. A free hand in using synonyms or reading according to the meanings of the vocabulary of the Qur'an is not regarded as *ikhtiyār*, because it contradicts the conditions for accepted readings. Hence, it is strongly rejected

27. *Ibid.*, 82.
28. *Ghayāt al Nihāyah*, 1:290.
29. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 417.
30. *Ibid.*, 418.
31. *Ibid.*, 419-20.
32. *Laṭā'if al Ishārāt*, 1:170.
33. *Al Intiṣāf* with *Al Kashshāf*, 2:69-70.
34. *Nashr*, 1:44.

and considered beyond *shādhdh.*[35] The scholars have agreed unanimously that this kind of reading is forbidden and should be stopped and destroyed. Certain examples, which are attributed to personal codices, were regarded as either unauthentic in their transmission or abrogated, according to the final revealed version of the Qur'an.[36]

Goldziher uses examples of this latter kind of reading to conclude that they were used to make fundamental changes in the successive readings,[37] ignoring the fact that all readings of this kind in contradiction of the common accepted readings are regarded as *shādhdh* and isolated reports opposed to *mutawātir.*[38] Abū 'Ubaydah, on the other hand, is reported as having said that the purpose of this kind of anomalous reading is to explain the meanings of the well-known (*mashhūr*) readings.[39]

The written text of the Qur'an is agreed to represent the first *ḥarf* in which it has been revealed.[40] Thus, the various other ways of reading in accordance with the permission to read the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*, regardless of the scholars' differences in their interpretation, were only variations in the ways of reading, which had to correspond with *riwāyah.* In this respect, the Companions and their Followers referred their readings to the teachings of the Prophet himself. Two examples are 'Umar Ibn al Khaṭṭāb and Hishām Ibn Ḥakīm.[41]

Thus Ibn Khālawayh, in his *Kitāb I'rāb Thalāthīn Sūrah min al Qur'ān al Karīm,*[42] states that the only authentic and accepted reading in the beginning of 89:1 is *"sabbiḥ isma Rabbika,"* although, linguistically it could be read as "*sabbīḥ (bi) ism(i) Rabbika,*" as we find elsewhere in the Qur'an, or *"fasibbiḥ bi ḥamdi Rabbika"* (15:98). But this reading is not accepted, because the *qirā'ah* should be according to the *riwāyah.*[43]

Ibn al Jazarī asserts that to use free analogy in selecting certain readings is forbidden. He attributes to certain Companions and their Followers ('Umar, Zayd, Ibn al Mukandir, 'Urwah, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al 'Azīz, and al Sha'bī) the statement: *"Qirā'ah* should be according to the sunnah (i.e., transmission of generations, one from each other) and everyone should read as he has been taught."[44]

35. *Nukat al Intiṣār*, 321-330; *Munjid*, 17-18.
36. For more information, see Chapter 4.
37. Goldziher, *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyyah*, 17; c.f. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 19.
38. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 192-93.
39. *Itqān*, 1:82.
40. See Chapter 3, 67.
41. *Bukhārī*, 6:48 (quoted in Chapter 1, 3-4).
42. Published in Cairo: 1360/1941.
43. *Ibid.*, 54.
44. *Nashr*, 1:17.

The 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* are said to have been freed from vocalization and dotting in order to preserve various authentic readings that correspond with the orthography of the *maṣāḥif*, but not to create readings according to every possible way of reading the text.[45]

For example, Sībawayh, in his *Al Kitāb*,[46] supports certain *qirā'āt* and objects to others, although they might be substantiated linguistically on the ground that the *qirā'ah* should be according to the sunnah and should not be rejected by the *'āmmah*.[47] He uses certain *qirā'āt* in support of grammatical arguments to substantiate the authenticity of certain grammatical constructions. For example, he says the evidence for the authenticity of a certain construction is the reading of the people of Madīnah.[48]

We find that earlier the Companions and their Followers supported certain chosen *qirā'āt*, mentioning the reasons for which this way or that is preferred. The first man among the Companions known as having adopted the practice of choosing certain *qirā'āt* and explaining the reason for his choices was Ibn 'Abbās,[49] who is reported as having read *nanshuruhā* (2:259) and substantiated his reading by quoting "*thumma idhā shā'a ansharah*" (80:22).

Among the earlier philologists we find al Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad, followed by his student Sībawayh, using grammatical, morphological, and phonetical evidence to substantiate the authenticity of certain *qirā'āt*.[50]

We also notice this phenomenon of choosing and selecting certain *qirā'āt* and of supporting them with evidence in the discussions of Qur'anic scholars and in books on such topics as *tafsīr*,[51] *ma'ānī al Qur'ān*,[52] and *i'rāb al Qur'ān*.[53]

For example, al Zujjāj in his *Ma'ānī al Qur'ān wa I'rābuh*[54] studies linguistically the various ways of reading *al ḥamdu* (1:2) and adopts *raf'* because it corresponds with the authentic *riwāyah* that should be followed in the Qur'an.[55]

Hārūn Ibn Mūsā al A'war (d. before 200/815) is reported to have gathered certain readings and to have investigated their transmission and other

45. *Munjid*, 56.
46. Published in Būlāq: 1316/1898.
47. *Ibid.*, 1:74.
48. *Al Kitāb*, 1:417 and passim.
49. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 2:293.
50. *Al Kitāb*, passim.
51. Abū Ḥayyān, *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, in 8 vols.
52. Al Farrā', *Ma'ānī al Qur'ān*, in 3 vols.
53. Ibn Khālawayh, *I'rāb Thalāthīn Sūrah min al Qur'ān al Karīm* (Cairo: 1360/1941).
54. Edited by 'Abd al Jalīl Shalabī (Cairo: 1394/1974).
55. *Ibid.*, 1:7.

evidence in order to authenticate them.[56] The people of his time objected to this work of al A'war on the grounds that the acceptability and authenticity of any *qirā'ah* should be subject only to its successive transmission.[57]

In this connection, Abū Ḥayyān reports Abū al 'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā as having not preferred any one of the seven readings and having said: "When the seven *Qurrā'* differ concerning the *i'rāb* and the Qur'an, I do not prefer one to another, but when I turn to the ordinary speech of the people I prefer the form which is stronger." Abū Ḥayyān agrees with the above statement, referring to Abū al 'Abbās as reliable, a man of religion, and a scholar of grammar and language.[58]

According to certain writers, numerous variations in ways of reading came about because the *maṣāḥif* were free from vocalization and dotting. Hence, the *Qurrā'* had differences of opinion as a result of the different possible readings.[59] An early example of this tendency is provided by Ibn Miqsam (d. 328/939), who is said to have relied only on the written text of the *muṣḥaf* and the Arabic language. He was prevented from propagating his views by the 'Abbāsid authorities, who were backed by the consensus of Qur'anic scholars of his time. His approach is not valid for, as we have seen, the *qirā'ah* was subject to the *riwāyah*, and we have the example of the argument between 'Umar and Hishām (where each of them referred to the Prophet as his authority).[60] The various readings were only according to the *riwāyah* and existed before the compilation of the Qur'an and the distribution of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* to the *amṣār* (which were themselves accompanied by distinguished *Qurrā'* to teach the people of their cities according to the *riwāyah*).[61] Moreover, if the people had been left free to read in any way possible compatible with the orthography of the *muṣḥaf*, it might have been expected that all such readings would have been accepted. For example, from the grammatical point of view, the Qur'anic phrase *kun fa yakūn* (3:47; 36:82) can be read either with *naṣb* or *raf'*. But the only way accepted in 3:47 is *raf'*, while both ways are accepted in 36:82.[62]

Another example of this kind of this reading is found in 22:23, where in the Uthmanic text the word لؤلؤا is written with *alif* (the same word is written without *alif* in 35:33). If the *Qurrā'* had followed only the orthog-

56. *Munjid*, 69.
57. *Ibid.*, 69-70.
58. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 4:87.
59. See, for example, Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al Adab al 'Arabī*, 1:134; *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyyah*, 4; c.f. Goldziher, *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 8; al Khaṭīb, *al Furqān*, 22 (also 17); al Ibyārī, *Al Mawsū'ah al Qur'āniyyah*, 1:80; al Khū'ī, *Al Bayān*, 181.
60. *Bukhārī*, 6:482-83.
61. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 183; Chapter 2, 32.
62. Al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān wa Gharā'ib Rasmih wa Ḥukmih*, 115.

raphy, they would have read the word with *naṣb* in the first example and with *khafḍ* in the latter. However, Nāfi' and 'Āṣim read both words with *naṣb*, while the rest of the *Qurrā'* read the first with *naṣb* and the latter with *khafḍ*.[63]

In regard to dotting, the only way of reading found in 2:123 is *wa lā tanfa'uha shafā'atun*, while a similar example is read with both *yā'* and *tā'*, in the same surah, i.e., *wa lā yuqbalu minhā shafā'atun* and *wa lā tuqbalu minhā shafā'atun* (2:48).[64]

In 4:94, the word فتبينوا is read as both *fa tathabbatū* and *fa ta-bayyanū*, because both were transmitted, while in 9:114 the word اياه is readable according to the orthography as إيّاه *iyyāhu*. This is the authentic reading attributed to the *'āmmah*, while the other possible way, أباه *abāhu*, is an anomalous reading contradictory to the common reading and is regarded as a strange reading (although it is attributed to Ḥammād al Rāwiyah). Furthermore, in 7:48 the word تستكبرون is read by the *'āmmah* as *tastakbirūn*, as opposed to the strange reading *tastakthirūn*, which is regarded as *shādhdh* on the grounds that it contradicts the *riwāyah*.[65]

On the other hand in certain words we find various authentic readings (e.g., *Jibrīl, Jabrīl, Jabra'īl*, and *Jabra'il*), while the orthography itself does not provide them all (which also confirms how essential *riwāyah* is).[66] Some other Qur'anic words are written differently from the usual way, but indicate only a single reading, which is that which is according to the *riwāyah*. Examples of this kind are لأاذبحنّه (27:21), لشائ 18:23), and وجائ (89:23), with the addition of an *alif*, which are read as *la adhbaḥannahū, li shay'in*, and *jī'a*. In this connection we also find بأييد (51:47) and بأييكم (68:6), with the addition of a *yā'*, which are read as *bi aydin* and *bi ayyikum*.[67] Accordingly, the original basis of any *qirā'ah* is agreed to be the *riwāyah*, while the orthography is always dependent on this.[68] Hence, in practice we find that the *Qurrā'* read in some places with consensus and differ in others although they are orthographically the same. For example, they agree unanimously on *mālik al mulk* (3:36) and *malik al nās* (114:2). However, they differ in 1:4 because certain *Qurrā'* read *malik* and others read *mālik*, and these readings are all authentic because of the soundness of their transmission.[69]

63. Abū Shāmah, *Ibrāz al Ma'ānī*, 406.
64. Al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 114-15.
65. Shalabī, *Rasm al Muṣḥaf wa al Iḥtijāj bi li al Qirā'āt*, 28.
66. Al Kurdī, *Tārīkh al Qur'ān*, 115-16.
67. *Ibid.*, 116.
68. Abū Shāmah, *Ibrāz al Ma'ānī*, 406.
69. *Al Nashr*, 1:271, 2:239, 405; *Taḥbīr al Taysīr*, 41, 96, 200.

Moreover, we find certain theoretical ways of reading that correspond with the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* and agree with the Arabic language but which no one among the *Qurrā'* is reported as having read. This also tends to confirm how essential *riwāyah* is. In this connection, scholars refer to *wa Qur'ānan faraqnāhu li taqra'ahu 'alā al nāsi 'alā mukthin* (17:106), which from the linguistic point of view could be read *mukth, makth,* and *mikth,* but is read by the consensus of the *Qurrā'* only as *mukth.*[70]

Goldziher advances the theory that these different readings arise from certain *Qurrā'* interpreting a vocalized and undotted text in accordance with their own understanding at a relatively late date. However, as we have seen above, this theory overlooks the importance of *riwāyah* and ignores the existence of many scholars who had devoted their studies to this subject. Whatever the reasons for the existence of variant readings, whether accepted or *shādhdh,* the explanations that Goldziher offers do not seem to rest on any real evidence. For example, he refers to a report that Qatādah (d. 117/735) (2:54) read *fa aqīlū anfusakum* instead of the authentic *fa uqtulū anfusakum.* Goldziher maintains that Qatādah considered the latter reading to convey a severe punishment that was incompatible with the sin mentioned and thus recited the passage in the alternative way attributed to him above. Commenting on this, Goldziher says: "In this example we see an objective point of view which was the reason behind the differing reading."[71]

However, to refute this we find that all versions except one report Qatādah as having read *fa uqtulū anfusakum* and having interpreted it as meaning that they stood fighting each other in two rows until they were asked to stop and that the result was martyrdom for those who were killed and repentance for those who remained alive.[72] Al Qurṭubī, who reports Qatādah as having read *fa aqīlū anfusakum,* interprets the word *aqīlū* (save) as meaning "save yourselves from error by killing," thereby giving it the same meaning as *aqtulū.*[73] Another example of this is Goldziher's treatment of 48:9, in which he uses certain authentic readings as opposed to others. Thus he notes that *tu'azzirūhu* is read by certain *Qurrā'* as *tu'azzizūhu,* using *zāy* instead of *rā'.* The reason behind this supposed change, he suggests, is that they may have wished to avoid the former word because it implies material aid, while the latter word is less restricted in meaning.[74] In fact, however, both words occur in different places in the Qur'an (for example, in 7:157 and 48:9) with no apparent difference in meaning. Furthermore, in the Arabic lexicon, *'azzara* and *naṣara* are

70. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 6:88.
71. *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyyah*, 5; c.f. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 11.
72. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 2:76; c.f. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 1:92.
73. *Al Qurṭubī*, 1:342.
74. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 11.

not different. Ibn Manẓūr interprets *'azzarahu* as *fakhkhamahu, wa 'azzamahu, wa a'ānahu, wa qawwāhu,* and *wa naṣarahu.* He quotes in support of his interpretation *li tu'azzirūhu wa tuwaqqirūhu* (48:9) and *wa 'azzartumūhum* (5:12).[75] He adds that in the Arabic language *al tāzīr* means *al naṣr* by tongue and sword. He reports Waraqah Ibn Nawfal as having said in support of the Prophet at the very beginning of the revelation, "If he is sent while I am alive I will aid him" (*sa u'azziruhu wa anṣuruhu*). Ibn Manẓūr says that here *al ta'zīr* means aid, elevated respect, and succor time after time.[76] Thus it cannot be maintained that *'azzara* and *'azzaza* are different in meaning.

With the same general approach, Goldziher considers that certain differences among the *Qurrā'* are because of their fear of attributing to God and his Apostle something that may detract from their attributes.

In support of this theory, Goldziher quotes 37:12: *bal 'ajibta wa yaskharūn* (Truly do they marvel while they ridicule), in which some of the *Qurrā'* of Kūfah read *'ajibta* with *fatḥ,* while the common reading of the rest of the *Qurrā'* is with *ḍammah* (i.e., *'ajibtu*). He argues that the *Mufassirūn* interpreted the word *'ajab* as referring to God with a difference of opinions, while some preferred to attribute the "marveling" to the Prophet, since it is inappropriate to attribute this to God. He maintains that the original meaning is *'ajibtu* with *ḍammah* and quotes al Ṭabarī. In fact, however, al Ṭabarī authenticates and accepts both readings on the grounds that the Qur'an has been revealed in two ways,[77] although he does mention that Shurayḥ (d. 80/699) read *'ajibta* with *fatḥ* and objected to the other reading on the grounds that *'ajab* cannot be attributed to God. However, Ibrāhīm al Nakha'ī is reported as having objected to Shurayḥ's argument and stated that 'Abd Allah Ibn Mas'ūd, who used to read *'ajibtu* with *ḍammah,* was more knowledgable than Shurayḥ.[78] According to Goldziher, the two readings contradict one another and the acceptance by al Ṭabarī of both readings indicates that it was difficult at his time to abandon one reading in favor of the other.[79] However, al Ṭabarī in his discussion confirms the authenticity of both readings and states that, although they differ in meaning, they are both correct and sound. He states in support of this view that the Prophet marveled at the verses that he was given, that the polytheists ridiculed him for this, and that God marveled at what the polytheists said.

75. *Lisān al 'Arab,* 6:237.
76. *Ibid.*
77. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 23:29.
78. *Al Kashshāf,* 4:37-38.
79. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī,* 33-35.

Furthermore, al Qurṭubī reports 'Alī Ibn Sulaymān as having said that both readings agree to give one meaning and that the reference in both *'ajibta* and *'ajibtu* is to the Prophet. He also quotes Abū Ja'far al Naḥḥās as having approved this interpretation and regarded it as sound. Al Qurṭubī adds that the meaning of *bal 'ajibtu* may be something like, "Truly their action is heinous in my eyes," and he quotes al Bayhaqī in support of this as having connected the word *'ajiba* in this context with the hadith *'ajiba Rabbuka.*[80] Moreover, al Naqqāsh is reported as having interpreted *bal 'ajibtu* as *bal ankartu.* Al Ḥasan Ibn al Faḍl is reported as having supported this by stating that *'ajab,* when it refers to God, means *inkār* and *ta'zīm,* and that this is an old Arab usage (*wa huwa lughat al 'Arab*).[81]

In fact, if readings were really not subject to the *riwāyah* or if a supposed fear of attributing to God and his Apostle certain defects had led the *Qurrā'* to change some ways of reading, as Goldziher thought, one might expect the *Qurrā'* to have changed many similar examples in the Qur'an. In fact, they have done nothing except interpret them according to the Arabic language. Examples may be quoted as follows:

> God disdains not (*lā yastaḥī*) to use the similitude of things lowest as well as highest. (2:26)
>
> They plot and plan and God too plans, but the best of planners is God. (8:30).
>
> Nay, both his hands are widely outstretched. He gives and spends (of His bounty, as He pleaseth). (5:67)
>
> Soon shall We settle your affairs, O both you worlds! (55:31)[82]

Moreover, Shurayḥ's opinion was rejected and regarded as unacceptable on the grounds that he contradicted the *tawātur.*[83] Finally, there is no evidence whatever for Goldziher's hypothesis that *'ajibtu* with *ḍammah* is the original reading.

The *Mufassirūn* interpret the verse so that both readings confirm one another,[84] and the *Qurrā'* accept and authenticate the two readings, because they agree with the conditions for accepted readings.[85]

Goldziher further argues that, in 12:110, the original reading is *kadhabū* and that the Muslims were confused and faced with the problem of finding a way to discard this reading. According to him, many solutions were sug-

80. For the text of this hadith and others, see *Qurṭubī,* 15:70-71.
81. *Ibid.,* 71.
82. Ḥammūdah, *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt,* 199-206.
83. Al Zamakhsharī, *Al Khashshāf,* 4:38; al Alūsī, *Rūḥ al Ma'ānī,* 23:70.
84. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 23:29; al Zamakhsharī, *Al Khashshāf,* 23:70.
85. *Nashr,* 2:356; *Al Kashf,* 2:223; *Ḥujjat al Qirā'āt,* 606-08.

gested, a fact that indicates that it was the original reading and that the readings *kudhibū* and *kudhdhibū* were introduced subsequently by the *Qurrā'*.[86]

Once again, however, it seems pointless to assert that any one reading is the original, since the text of the Qur'an does not provide any evidence for such a claim. This reading, in fact, is not attributed to any *Qāri'* except Mujāhid.[87] Indeed, it has been argued that the original readings are *kudhibū* and *kudhdhibū,* which are the common ones, and that the anomalous reading that is attributed solely to Mujāhid is derived from the two authentic readings[88] (and not the opposite, as Goldziher maintained).[89]

Mujāhid is reported as having interpreted the verse as meaning, "When the Apostles gave up hope of their people (who rejected their message) being punished and that their people thought that the Apostles told a lie, there reached them Our help."[90]

However, al Ṭabarī states that this reading has been rejected unanimously on the grounds that it contradicts the authentic readings of the *amṣār*. He argues that if the reading were permissible, it would have been interpreted in a way not contradicting the successive readings and would have been better than that of Mujāhid. The best interpretation for Mujāhid's reading, according to al Ṭabarī, is, "Until when the Apostles give up hope of their people who treated them as liars—being punished by God—and the Apostles knew that their people lied . . ."

Al Ṭabarī offers this interpretation, on the authority of al Ḥasan and Qatādah, that *ẓann* may give the meaning of *'ilm* (knowledge).[91] Thus, both Mujāhid's reading and his interpretation contradict the consensus of the *Qurrā'* and *Mufassirūn*.[92] Ibn al Jazarī states that Abū al Qāsim al Hudhalī, in his *Al Kāmil,* attributes to Mujāhid certain readings with a nonauthentic *isnād*[93] and elsewhere describes al Hudhalī's book as full of errors concerning the *asānīd* of *qirā'āt* and as containing unaccepted readings that have no authentic transmission.[94] Ibn Khālawayh also includes this reading of Mujāhid in the anomalous readings.[95]

Goldziher mentions 'Ā'ishah's contribution to this discussion, but his account is misleading, in that the discussion was concerned purely with the question of *kudhdhibū* as opposed to *kudhibū,* which she rejected in

86. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 42.
87. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 16:309-10; Ibn Khālawayh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 65; *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 8:296.
88. *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 209.
89. *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyyah*, 25; c.f. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 41-42.
90. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 16:310.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*, 16:309-10.
93. *Ghāyat al Nihāyah*, 2:42.
94. *Ibid.*, 1:349.
95. *Mukhtaṣar*, 65.

favor of the former[96] (although her objection was in fact to the interpretation attributed to Ibn 'Abbās rather than the *qirā'ah* itself).[97]

Al Qasṭallānī argues that 'Ā'ishah's objection was to the reading *kidhibū,* on the grounds that she had not received it in the manner of *tawātur.*[98] As for the reading *kadhabū,* it does not appear at all in this discussion, and Goldziher is incorrect in supposing that she was objecting to *kadhabū.*

While Mujāhid's reading is regarded as *shādhdh,* being attributed only to him, two authentic and successive readings are among the highly esteemed seven canonical readings. The first is *kudhibū,* which is attributed to Ubayy, 'Alī, Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ibn 'Abbās among the Companions; to their Followers Mujāhid, Ṭalḥah, and al A'mash; and to 'Āṣim, Ḥamzah, and al Kisā'ī, who represent the Kūfans among the seven distinguished *Qurrā'.*[99] Al Zamakhsharī based his *tafsīr* on this reading and interprets it as meaning, "Until when the Apostles thought that their souls were telling them a lie when they told them that they would be victorious," or, "Their hope told them a lie."[100]

Goldziher misunderstood al Zamakhsharī, believing that his interpretation represented *kadhabū.*[101] However, a careful reading of the interpretation confirms that it is based on *kudhibū,* and the matter is resolved further by the fact that he mentions *kadhabū* separately, attributing it to Mujāhid.[102] The second authentic reading is *kudhdhibū,* which is attributed to 'Ā'ishah.[103] It is also attributed to al Ḥasan, Qatādah, Muḥammad Ibn Ka'b, Abū Rajā', Ibn Abi Mulaykah, and al A'raj among the Followers,[104] and to Nāfi', Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āmir, and Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā among the seven distinguished *Qurrā'.*[105]

'Ā'ishah is reported to have interpreted this verse according to her reading *kudhdhibū* as "until when the Apostles gave up hope of their people who had treated them as liars becoming believers, and the Apostles had come to think that they had been treated as liars among their own fellows, there reached them the help of God."[106]

96. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 16:306-08; *Fatḥ al Bārī,* 8:367f.
97. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 16:306-07.
98. *Irshād al Sārī,* 7:216.
99. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 5:354.
100. *Al Kashshāf,* 3:510.
101. *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyyah,* 25; c.f. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī.*
102. *Al Kashshāf,* 3:510.
103. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 16:308.
104. *Ibid.*; *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 5:354.
105. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 16:309.
106. *Ibid.,* 16:308.

Al Ṭabarī attributes to certain other scholars who read *kudhdhibū* the following interpretation of the verse: "Until when the Apostles came to think that (meaning by *ẓann* in this context *'ilm* [knowledge]) their people treated them as liars, there reached them our help."[107] This latter interpretation of the word *ẓann* to mean *'ilm* is attributed to al Ḥasan and Qatādah. However, al Ṭabarī objects to the interpretation on the grounds that it contradicts the views of the Companions. He adds that the Arabs use the word *ẓann* in the place of *'ilm* only where the knowledge is acquired by the means of reports or when it is not physically seen. Thus the word *ẓann* in this verse cannot mean *'ilm*.[108]

In another example, which Goldziher also quotes in support of his theory, Ibn 'Abbās is reported as having read *fa in āmanū bi mā āmantum bi hī* or *fa in āmānū bi al ladhī āmantum bi hī* as opposed to the common reading that corresponds with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*: *fa in āmanū bi mithli mā āmantum bi hi* (2:137). Ibn 'Abbās bases his objection to the common reading on the grounds that there is no being similar to God.[109]

However, al Ṭabarī states that this report about Ibn 'Abbās contradicts the common *maṣāḥif* of the Muslims and the consensus of the *Qurrā'*.[110] Furthermore, Ibn 'Abbās himself is reported as having agreed on the reading with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[111] According to al Ṭabarī, the interpretation of this verse should be: "When they believe in what is mentioned in this passage of the books of God and his Prophets as you believe in them, they are indeed on the right path." He concludes that what is meant by similarity in this connection is the similarity between two beliefs, not between what is believed.[112]

On this point, al Zajjāj argues that if someone were to ask if anything is similar to *īmān* other than *īmān* itself, the reply is that the meaning is clear; that is, if they believe as you believe in the prophets and believe in unity as you do, they are therefore on the straight path and have become Muslims like you.[113]

Furthermore, the author of *Muqaddimat Kitāb al Mabānī*[114] studies the construction of this verse linguistically and supports its authenticity on the following grounds: It means if they believe as you believe; the letter *bā'* is added only for emphasis (*ta'kīd*) and the sense of the phrase is *mithla*

107. *Ibid.*
108. *Ibid.*, 16:309.
109. *Ibid.*, 2:114.
110. *Ibid.*
111. *Ibid.*, 2:113.
112. *Ibid.*, 2:114.
113. *Ma'ānī al Qur'ān wa I'rābuhu*, 1:195.
114. Anonymous, see *Muqaddimatān*, 116.

mā āmantum bi hi; and the word *mithl* is added in order to provide corroboration (*tawkīd*) and the sense of the phrase is thus *fa in āmānu bi mā āmantum bi hi.*

In this connection, reference is made to 42:11, *laysa ka mithlihi shay'un* (nothing is like Him), where the word *mithl* is added for the purpose of intensification so that the meaning of the passage is: "There is nothing whatever like unto Him." Another example in support of this interpretation is this poetic verse: "*Ka mithl al shams idh bazaghat bi hā nuḥẓā wa mi'ṭāru,* where the word *mithl* is added in the same way."[115]

Ibn Abī Dāwūd narrates this *riwāyah* in different versions, but objects to them all and states that it is written *bi mithl mā āmantum bi hi* in *Muṣḥaf al Imām* and all the *maṣāḥif* of the cities, and that it is accepted in the language of the Arabs. It is impossible, he says, that the people of the cities and the Companions should have agreed on an error, particularly in the Qur'an and the practice of prayers. He continues that it is right and accepted in the speech of the Arabs to say to a person who meets you in a manner of which you disapprove, "*Ayustaqbalu mithlī bi hādhā*?" ("Does someone like me get treated like this?") He quotes in support, *laysa ka mithlihi shay'un* (42:11), which means *laysa ka mithli Rabbī shay'un,* and the expressions *lā yuqālu lī wa lā li mithlī* and *lā yuqālu li akhīka wa lā li mithli akhīka,* in which these expressions mean "myself."[116]

In conclusion, the report attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, like many others that contradict the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif,* is no more than an isolated report (*khabar āḥād*) in opposition to successive (*mutawātir*) readings, which are accepted by the consensus of the *Qurrā'* on the gounds of their authenticity in transmission, orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif,* and accordance with the Arabic language.

Ibn al Jazarī states that the readings may differ in various meanings according to the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf.* These variations in meaning do not contradict one another, because it is impossible that contradiction could be found in Qur'an 4:82, which states: "Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy."[117]

Goldziher thinks that the Qur'an includes examples of contradiction and that 30:2-4 is one example to support his theory. Here he argues that the two readings *ghalabat . . . sayughlabūna* and *ghulibat . . . sayaghlibūna* contradict each other, because the victorious according to the former reading are the defeated according to the latter reading. He main-

115. *Muqaddimatān,* 116.
116. *Kitāb al Maṣāḥif,* 76-77.
117. *Nashr,* 1:48.

tains that most of the *Qurrā'* read in accordance with the former reading,[118] and that the Muslim scholars regarded the victory of the Greeks in 625 A.D. as a miracle of the Prophet, because the event took place according to his prophecy (although according to Goldziher it indicates no more than a hope).[119]

In fact, however, the former reading is attributed only to certain Companions ('Alī, Abū Sa'īd al Khudrī, Ibn 'Abbās, and Ibn 'Umar) and Followers (Mu'āwiyah Ibn Qurrah and al Ḥasan).[120] It is not accepted by the consensus of scholars and thus is regarded as *shādhdh*. The only authentic reading accepted by the *'āmmah* and regarded as *mutawātir* is the latter reading.[121]

The former reading, although regarded as *shādhdh*, does not in fact contradict the common reading in its meaning if the historical accounts are studied carefully, or, as al Alūsī puts it, if it is permissible for two readings to differ from each other in regard to their meaning (provided they do not contradict one another, and there is no contradiction in a group of people being victorious and defeated at two different times).[122] Thus, around the year 615 A.D., the Byzantine Empire was defeated by Persia while Persia was defeated later by the Byzantines around the year 622 A.D., which confirms the common reading:

> The Roman Empire has been defeated in a land close by; but they (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon be victorious—within a few years. With God is the decision in the past and the future: on the day shall the believers rejoice with the help of God. He helps whom He will and He is exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

In regard to the other *shādhdh* reading, we find in its support that the Romans, after their victory in Syria, were defeated by the Muslims in Jordan in 8 A.H. in the battle known as *Ghazwat Mu'tah*, which was followed by the battle of Yarmūk in 14 A.H.[123]

Finally, the prophecy of these Qur'anic verses is accepted by Muslims as a miracle in their *mutawātir* reading, irrespective of Goldziher's interpretation. In this connection, al Zamakhsharī asserts that this verse is one of the greatest miracles that bears witness to the trueness of the prophecy of the Prophet and to the fact that the Qur'an is revealed from

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118. *Al Madhāhib al Islāmiyyah*, 18; c.f. *Madhāhib al Tafsīr al Islāmī*, 29-31.
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 7:161; *Qurṭubī*, 14:4; al Alūsī, *Rūḥ al Ma'ānī*, 21:17.
121. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 7:161.
122. Al Alūsī, *Rūḥ al Ma'ānī*, 21:17.
123. *Ibid.*; Ḥammūdah, *Al Qirā'āt wa al Lahajāt*, 198.

God, because it relates knowledge of the unseen, which is not known except to God.[124]

The 'Uthmānic *Maṣāḥif* and the Problem of Grammatical or Orthographical Errors

It is reported that when the *maṣāḥif* were compiled and brought before 'Uthmān to look through, he found *laḥn* in certain *aḥruf* but told the committee of the *maṣāḥif* to leave them as they were, on the grounds that the Arabs would read them soundly.[125] According to another version, he added that if the scribe was from Thaqīf and the reciter from Hudhayl, there would not be any *laḥn*.[126]

However, al Dānī states that this report is groundless and not acceptable for the following reasons: first its chain is weak, being *mursal*, and its context (*matn*) is *muḍṭarib* (weak). Second, it seems impossible that 'Uthmān, who, with the agreement of the Companions, compiled the *maṣāḥif* in order to unite the Muslims and end the dispute among them, would have left any *laḥn* or error in the *maṣāḥif* to be corrected by those who came after him.[127]

Finally, al Dānī argues that if the report is supposed to be authentic, the word *laḥn* means the recitation rather than the orthography, because many words, if read according to their orthography in the *maṣāḥif*, would have a different meaning; for example من نبائ المرسلين , لأاوضعوا , لأاذبحنه ساوريكم and الربوا . 'Uthmān may thus have meant this latter kind, which the Arabs would read soundly, since the Qur'an had been revealed in their language.[128]

Al Dānī goes on to report that when 'Ā'ishah was asked about this *laḥn*, she replied that the scribes had erred (*akhṭa'ū*). The passages that she cited as including mistakes are the following:

1. 20:63 *in hadhāni la sāḥirāni*
2. 4:162 *wa al muqīmīna al ṣalāta wa al mūtūna al zakāta*
3. 5:72 *inna al ladhīna āmanū wa al ladhīna hādū wa al ṣābi'ūna*[129]

Al Dānī argues that 'Ā'ishah considered these readings not to be the most fluent and regarded her own *ikhtiyār* as the best, on the grounds that she could not have used the word *akhṭa'ū* literally, since the scribes had

124. Al Zamakhsharī, *Al Kashshāf*, 3:467.
125. Al Dānī, *Al Muqni,'* 124.
126. *Ibid.*, 125.
127. *Al Muqni'*, 124.
128. *Ibid.*, 124-25.
129. *Ibid.*, 126-28; Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 9:395; *Muqaddimatān*, 104-5.

written in this way with the consensus of the Companions. In support of his argument, Al Dānī quotes certain scholars as having interpreted 'Ā'ishah's statement as meaning that the scribes made mistakes in choosing the best *from* among the seven *aḥruf.* According to them, *laḥn* means recitation or *lughah,* as in the statement of 'Umar: "*Ubayy aqra'unā wa innā la nada'u ba'ḍa laḥnihi*" (i.e., *qirā'atihi*—his recitation).[130]

The author of *Kitāb al Mabānī*[131] attributes to certain scholars the view that 'Ā'ishah objected to these readings because they did not correspond with the Qurayshī dialect, although they are sound according to the other dialects of the Arabs.[132]

In addition, it is said that there are other orthographical errors in the *maṣāḥif* as follows:

1. 2:177 *wa al mūfūna bi 'abdihim idhā 'āhādu wa al ṣābirīna*
2. 63:10 *fa aṣṣaddaqa wa akun min al ṣāliḥīn*
3. 21:3 *wa asarrū al najwā al ladhīna ẓalamū*[133]

However, al Ṭabarī supports the authenticity of all the examples mentioned above according to various Arab dialects.[134] He states that if they had been written wrongly in the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif,* we would have found all earlier *maṣāḥif* disagreeing with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif,* whereas Ubayy is reported as having agreed in his reading and *muṣḥaf* with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif.* For example, *wa al muqīmīna al ṣalāta wa al mūtūna al zakāta* (4:162) is found in the *muṣḥaf* of Ubayy in the same way as in the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif.* Al Ṭabarī concludes that the agreement of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* with that of Ubayy indicates that what is in our *maṣāḥif* today is sound and correct, and that if in fact there had been mistakes in the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif,* the Companions would not have taught their Followers except in the correct manner. Finally, he states that the transmission by the Muslims of these readings, in accordance with the orthography as found in the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif,* is the strongest evidence of their correctness and soundness. He adds that this has nothing to do with the scribes and one should not attribute to them any mistake in writing.[135]

The scribes of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* are reported to have differed as to whether the word التابوت should be written with final *tā'* or *hā'*. 'Uthmān

130. *Al Muqni',* 127-28.
131. Included in *Muqaddimatān,* edited by A. Jeffery (Cairo: 1954).
132. *Ibid.,* 115.
133. *Ibid.,* 104.
134. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 3:352-54, 9:394-97.
135. *Ibid.,* 9:397-98.

is said to have commanded them to write it with final *tā'*, according to the Qurayshī dialect, on the grounds that the Qur'an has been revealed in their dialect.[136]

Since the scribes consulted 'Uthmān whenever they differed in writing certain words and he would correct them, it is unlikely that he found cases of *laḥn* in the *aḥruf* of the Qur'an and left them to the people to correct in their readings. If he had told the scribes to leave alleged *laḥn* to be corrected by the Arabs, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have done the same thing with the word التابوت .

Furthermore, the author of *Kitāb al Mabānī*[137] studies all examples mentioned above and substantiates their acceptability as good Arabic according to various Arab dialects, quoting in support of each example many lines of ancient Arab poetry.[138]

As to the authenticity of these examples from the linguistic point of view, the views of the commentators are discussed in detail below:

1. Qur'an 20:63: *Qālū inna hādhāni la sāhirāni*

Abū 'Ubaydah is reported as having stated about the *muṣḥaf* of 'Uthmān concerning ان هذن لسحرن (20:63) that it was with the omission of *alif*, being *marfū'*, and that the scribes added *yā'* in cases of *naṣb* and *khafḍ*.[139] This Qur'anic passage is read in variant accepted readings that we will discuss with their different *i'rāb* and interpretation as follows:

a. *In hādhāni la sāḥirāni* being attributed to Ḥafṣ, the *rāwī* of 'Āṣim.
b. *In hādhāni la sāḥirānni* being attributed to Ibn Kathīr.[140] Both of these readings read ان as *in*.

In both of these cases *hādhāni* is *mubtada'* and its *khabar* is *la sāḥirāni* or *la sāḥirānni.*

c. *Inna hādhāni la sāḥirāni*, which is read by *'āmmah* of the *Qurrā'*. It is attributed to Nāfi', Ibn 'Āmir, Shu'bah (another *Rāwī* of Ḥafṣ), Ḥamzah, al Kisā'ī, Abū Ja'far, Yaq'ūb, and Khalaf.[141]

The grammarians suggested various kinds of *i'rāb* and interpretations for this reading as follows:

1. It is *ḍamīr al sha'n* with the *-hu* omitted and is to be understood as

136. *Bukhārī*, 6:479.
137. *Muqaddimatān*, edited by A. Jeffery (Cairo: 1954).
138. *Ibid.*, 104-16.
139. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 6:255.
140. *Ibid.*; *Nashr*, 2:320-21.
141. *Nashr*, 2:321.

meaning *innahu hādhāni*. This view is regarded as weak. In support of this interpretation, 'Abd Allāh Ibn al Zubayr is reported as having said "*Inna wa rākibahā*" to a poet who said to him, "*La'ana Allāhu nāqatan ḥamalatnī ilayka.*"[142]

2. *Inna* in this context is said to mean *na'am*.[143] It is also said that *hadhāni* is *mubtada'* and its *khabar* is *lā sāḥirani* (as attributed to al Mubarrid, Ismā'īl Ibn Isḥāq, and Abū al Ḥasan al Akhfash al Ṣaghīr).
3. Abū Ḥayyān cites the following Arabs as using the dual of this word with *alif* in all cases: Kinānah, Banū al Ḥārith Ibn Ka'b, Khath'am, Zabīd and the people of his region, Banū al Anbār, Banū Hajīm, Murād, and 'Udhrah. Abū Ḥayyān considers this the best explanation of this reading.[144]

Al Zamakhsharī similarly states that certain Arabs treat the *alif* of the dual as *alif maqṣūrah* (i.e., invariable).[145] The author of *Muqaddimat Kitāb al Mabānī*[146] claims that Quraysh adopted this form from Banū al Ḥārith. He states that the Quraysh say *akramtu al rajulāni, rakibtu al farasāni*, and *naẓartu ilā al 'abdāni*. He reports al Farrā' as having narrated on the authority of a man belonging to al Azd on the authority of certain people of Banū al Ḥārith that they recited the saying of al Mutalammis as follows: *Fa aṭraqa iṭraqa al shujā'i wa law ra'ā / masāghan linābāhu al shujā' laṣammamā*, and that Banū al Ḥārith say *hādhā khaṭṭu yadā akhī a'rifuhū*. He also attributes to them the poetic verse *Inna abāhā wa abā abāhā qad balaghā fī al majdi ghayatāhā.*[147]

Finally Abū 'Amr Ibn al 'Alā' is reported as having read *inna hādhayni la sāḥirāni*. However, Abū Ḥayyān reports al Zajjāj as having objected to this reading on the grounds that it did not correspond with the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*.[148]

2. Qur'an 4:162: *Wa al muqīmīna al ṣalāta wa al mūtūna al zakāta.*

The word *al muqīmīn* is written and read with *naṣb* being the *naṣb* of praise while, according to Sībawayh, *al muqīmīn* is in *khafḍ*, being in opposition to the word *minhum*.[149] Al Zamakhsharī states that no attention should be paid to the claim that an orthographical error appears, here or elsewhere. This claim, he says, is made only by those who do not know the various

142. *Muqaddimatān*, 111.
143. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 6:255.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Al Kashshāf*, 3:72.
146. Included in *Muqaddimatān*.
147. *Ibid.*, 109.
148. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 6:255.
149. *Al Kashshāf*, 1:590.

ways the Arabs use their language. He argues that the *salaf*, who were known for their wide knowledge, their virtues, and their vigorous support of Islam, could not possibly have left any defect in the *muṣḥaf* to be corrected by the following generation.[150]

3. Qur'an 5:69: *Inna al ladhīna āmanū wa al ladhīna hādū wa al Ṣabi'ūna wa al Naṣārā.*

The word *al ṣābi'ūna* is written and read with *raf'* being a *mubtada'* whose *khabar* is omitted, which may be understood as meaning *inna al ladhīna āmanū wa al ladhīna hādū wa al Naṣārā ḥukmuhum kadhā wa al Sābi'ūna kadhālika.*

In support, al Zamakhsharī cites Sībawayh as having quoted the following example: *wa illā fa 'iamū annā wa antum bughātun mā baqīna fī shiqāqi* meaning *fa 'iamū annā bughātun wa antum kadhālika.*[151]

4. Qur'an 2:177: *Wa al mūfūna bi 'ahdihim idhā 'āhadū wa al ṣābirīna.*

The word *al ṣābirīn* is read with *naṣb,* as it is written in the *maṣāḥif* as being regarded as a *naṣb* of distinction and praise.[152] Al Ṭabarī states that this form is found in the Arabic language and quotes in support certain lines.[153]

5. Qur'an 62:10: *Fa aṣṣaddaqa wa akun min al ṣāliḥīn.*

The word *akun* is read with *jazm,* as it is written in the *maṣāḥif* as being dependent on the phrase *law lā akhkhartanī*, as though the sentence were *In akhkhartanī aṣṣaddaq wa akun . . .*[154]

6. Qur'an 21:3: *Wa asarrū al najwā al ladhīna ẓalamū*

Abū Ḥayyān states that all the various kinds of *i'rāb, raf', naṣb,* and *khafḍ* are suggested for *al ladhīna ẓalamū* in 21:3. They are as follows:

First, *raf'*, with various interpretations:

a. It is *badal* (permutative) of the noun of *asarrū.*

b. It is the agent *(fā'il)* belonging to the verb *ẓalamu,* while *wa asarrū* indicates only the plural.

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150. *Ibid.*
151. *Ibid.*, 660-61.
152. *Ibid.*, 220.
153. Al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 3:352-53.
154. *Al Kashshāf*, 4:544.

According to this interpretation it would be an example of *lughat akalūnī al barāghīth*. This latter interpretation is regarded by certain scholars as being *lughah shādhdhah*. However, according to others it is *lughah ḥasanah*, being attributed to *lughat Azd Shanū'ah*. This is supported by a similar passage in 5:71, *thumma 'amū wa ṣammū kathīrun minhum*, and a poetic verse attributed to a poet among the Azd Shanū'ah: *Yalūmūnani fi'shtirā'i al nakhīli ahlī wakulluhumū alwamu*.

c. According to certain other grammarians, *al ladhīna* is *mubtada'* and its *khabar* is *wa asarrū al najwā*.

d. *Al ladhīna* is *fā'il* and its *fi'l* is omitted, being understood from the passage. It may be assumed to be, for example, *yaqūlu* or *asarra-hā*.

e. According to certain other grammarians, *al ladhīna* is *khabar* and its *mubtada'*, which is *hum*, is omitted.

Second, it is suggested that the *i'rāb* of *al ladhīna* is *naṣb* either to indicate blame or with the word *a'nī* understood.

Finally, it is suggested that the *i'rāb* of *al ladhīna* is *khafḍ*, on the assumption that it is attributed to the word *li al nāsi* in the first verse, or that it is *badal* of this word.

However, Abū Ḥayyān regards this as unlikely (*ab'ad al aqwāl*),[155] while al Zamakhsharī does not mention it at all.[156]

The text of the Qur'an allows variant readings according to the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf*. Also, the language of the Qur'an is the common literary language of the Arabs and includes various Arab dialects. Therefore, the philologists and the grammarians should not have disputed any reading corresponding with one of the Arab dialects. In fact, many of them are reported as having objected to certain authentic readings only because they do not correspond with the most fluent Arabic or they considered them strange, wrong, or of uncommon usage.

The grammatical schools of Baṣrah and Kūfah disagreed on the authenticity and acceptability of certain readings only because they did not correspond with their analogies or to their criteria of fluency for the various Arab dialects.[157]

The scholars of the Kūfan school are, in fact, said to have respected and accepted the *qirā'āt* more than those of the Baṣran school, although in a few cases the Kūfans did object to certain accepted readings. In this con-

155. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 6:296-97.
156. *Al Kashshāf*, 3:102.
157. *Madrasat al Kūfah*, 337.

nection, we refer to a Kūfan grammarian, al Kisā'ī, who is at the same time a *Qārī'*. He is reported to have objected to the reading of the *'āmmah* in 58:11, *qad sami'a* with the *iẓhār* of *dāl* in *qad,* preferring his own *ikhtiyār* with *idghām* (i.e., *qas-sami'a*).[158] In addition, al Farrā' is reported as having refuted the reading of Ibn 'Āmir in 6:137.[159]

The scholars of the Baṣran school are known to have objected to certain linguistic features in the readings even if they originated with the seven highly esteemed canonical readers listed by of Ibn Mujāhid. To cite an example, Abū al Ṭayyib al Lughawī denied the scholarship of the Kūfan *Qurrā'* and grammarians.[160] He was supported by his student al Mubarrid, who vehemently rejected any reading that did not correspond with his Baṣran analogy.[161] For example, he objected to the reading of Ḥamzah in 4:1, *wa attaqū Allāha al ladhī tasā'alūna bi hī wa al arḥāmi* with *khafḍ* in *al arḥāmi,*[162] while the majority read it with *naṣb.*[163] Al Qurṭubī reports al Mubarrid as having said that if he had heard any *imām* reading thus, according to the reading of Ḥamzah, he would have certainly left him and gone away.[164]

However, both ways of reading are accepted among the *Qurrā'*, and the reading of Ḥamzah with *khafḍ* is accepted as fluent Arabic.[165]

In fact, the philologists and grammarians agree in theory that the *Qurrā'* follow the sunnah in their *ikhtiyār* and that their readings correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and agree with the Arabic language. In this respect, Ibn Jinnī supports certain readings, although he sometimes cannot find any linguistical evidence in their support. He accepts them on the grounds that the *Qārī'* must have heard it and that he could not have read freely without relying on the *riwāyah.*[166]

However, the philologists and grammarians failed to apply their theory in practice consistently. This includes Ibn Jinnī, who, following his Baṣran school, objects to certain authentic readings.[167]

In fact, we find this phenomenon even among certain *Qurrā'* who are reported to have objected to certain accepted readings. This includes Abū 'Ubayd and al Zajjāj, who are reported to have objected to the reading in 14:22 of *wa mā antum bi muṣrikhiyyi* with *khafḍ* as opposed to *bi*

158. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 8:232.
159. *Ma'ānī al Qur'ān*, 1:357-58; see pp. 170-171 of this study.
160. *Marātib al Naḥwiyyīn*, 26.
161. 'Uḍaymah, ed., int., *Al Muqtaḍab*, 1:111.
162. *Al Kāmil*, 3:39.
163. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 3:157.
164. *Tafsīr*, 5:2.
165. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 3:157. For more information, see p. 164-165 of this book.
166. *Al Muḥtasib*, 1:85-86, 2:27, 252.
167. *Ibid.*, 1:240-43; *Al Khaṣā'iṣ*, 1:72-73.

muṣrikhiyya.[168] Abū 'Amr ibn al 'Alā' is also reported as having objected to the reading of Ḥamzah in 18:44 of *hunālika al wilāyatu* and *mālakum min wilāyatihim* (8:72) as opposed to the commoner *al walāyatu* and *walāyatihim,* regarding the former as *laḥn.*[169] Likewise, Hārūn al A'war is reported as having objected to the reading of Ibn 'Āmir in 19:42 of *yā-abata* which, according to him, is *laḥn,* as opposed to *yā abati.*[170]

Let us look at certain examples in which grammarians objected to certain accepted readings among the seven distinguished readings, and then examine them and substantiate their authenticity and acceptability in the Arabic language with references to their origins among the various Arabic dialects.

In 14:22, the common reading is *wa mā antum bimuṣrikhiyya* with *naṣb* of the final *yā',* while Ḥamzah, one of the seven distinguished *Qurrā',* reads *bi muṣrikhiyyi.* Al Zamakhsharī considers this latter reading weak.[171]

Abū Ḥayyān reports certain philologists and grammarians as having rejected this latter reading, but he states that the reading is authentic and sound Arabic, though rare, being attributed to the dialect of the Banū Yarbū'. He quotes Quṭrub and certain other authorities in support of his argument.[172]

In 4:1, the common reading is *wa attaqū Allāha al ladhī tasa'alūna bi hi wa al arḥāma,* while it is read by Ḥamzah, being attributed also to al Nakha'ī, Qatādah, and al A'mash, as *arḥāmi.*[173] Certain grammarians object to this latter reading on the grounds that it is not sound Arabic, and leading Baṣran grammarians do not accept this form.[174] Abū Ḥayyān, however, supports this reading because of its authenticity and the fluency of its Arabic, as supported by various examples in Arabic prose and poetry. He states that the Kūfan school, which accepts and supports this form, is correct and that the Baṣrans are wrong in objecting to it.[175]

In addition, Abū Ḥayyān studies the transmission of the latter reading. He asserts that it is a successive reading and has been received from the Prophet by way of *tawātur,* and that Ḥamzah has not read any *ḥarf* in the Qur'an except with *āthār.* He concludes that it is not necessary that the Arabic language follow either the Baṣran school or any other, for

168. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 5:419.
169. *Nashr,* 2:277; *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 6:130.
170. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 6:193.
171. *Al Kashshāf,* 2:551.
172. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 5:420.
173. *Ibid.,* 3:157.
174. *Ibid.; Al Kashshāf,* 1:462; al Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr,* 3:519-20; *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 3:158.
175. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ,* 3:158-59.

there are many parts of Arabic transmitted only by the Kūfans and many other parts transmitted only by the Baṣrans.[176]

Ibn al Jazarī states that Ḥamzah was the chief *Qāri'* of Kūfah, after 'Āṣim and al A'mash, and that he was reliable; knowledgeable in the Qur'an, the Arabic language, and other fields of Islamic studies; and devout.[177] He elsewhere states that Ḥamzah has not read a single *ḥarf* except with *āthār*.[178]

Ibn 'Āmir, one of the seven canonical *Qurrā'*, is reported as having read 4:137 as *wa kadhālika zuyyina likathīrin min al mushrikīna qatlu awlādahum shurakā'ihim*, while the common reading of the people of Ḥijāz and Iraq is *wa kadhālika zayyana likathīrin min al mushrikīn qatla awlādihim shurakā'uhum*,[179] which means "Even so, in the eyes of most pagans, their 'partners' made alluring the slaughter of their children." Al Zamakhsharī objects to the former reading in which Ibn 'Āmir read *qatlu* with *raf'*, *awlādahum* with *naṣb*, and *shurakā'ihim* with *khafḍ* on the grounds that it is not fluent and should not be used in the language of the Qur'an. He maintains that Ibn 'Āmir read in this way because he saw the word *shurakā'ihim* in certain *maṣāḥif* with *yā'* as شركايهم.[180]

However, Ibn al Munayyir refutes al Zamakhsharī's allegation and supports the reading of Ibn 'Āmir on the grounds that it has been transmitted with *tawātur*. He rejects al Zamakhsharī's idea that the *Qurrā'* of the seven readings read optionally or simply followed the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* without relying on *riwāyah*.[181]

Abū Ḥayyān discusses and supports the reading of Ibn 'Āmir and says that certain grammarians accept this form in Arabic, although the majority of the Baṣran school reject it (except in the case of poetic license). He asserts that Ibn 'Āmir's reading is correct on the grounds that it has been transmitted in the manner of *tawātur* and is attributed to a fluent Arab, Ibn 'Āmir (who received it from 'Uthmān before the appearance of *laḥn* in the tongue of the Arabs), and that many verses of poetry support this form.[182]

Ibn al Jazarī refers to Ibn 'Āmir as a great *Imām*, a respected Follower, and a prominent scholar who led prayers in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus during the reign of 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al 'Azīz . Ibn 'Āmir was

176. *Ibid.*, 3:159.
177. *Nashr*, 1:166.
178. *Ghayāt al Nihāyah*, 1:263.
179. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 4:229.
180. *Al Kashshāf*, 2:70.
181. *Al Intiṣāf*, with *al Kashshāf*, 2:69.
182. *Al Baḥr al Muḥīṭ*, 4:229.

also the chief *Qāḍī* and *Qāri'*, and his reading is accepted with consensus of the *salaf*.[183]

Moreover, Ibn Ḥajar al 'Asqalānī points out that the *i'rāb* of the hadith *fa hal antum tārikū li aṣḥābī* agrees with that of the reading of Ibn 'Āmir, since in the latter passage the *muḍāf* and the *muḍāf ilayhi* are separated by a prepositional phrase, while in the former they are separated by the direct object.[184]

Arabic grammar perhaps should have been based on all Arabic literature in its various dialects, and the Qur'anic readings should have been accepted and used in the construction of Arabic grammar. However, the grammarians opted for the opposite when they rejected certain *qirā'āt* because they differed from their analogy or the common rule.

Al Rāzī objects to this approach and states that often the grammarians have been uncertain as to how to support the fluency and acceptability of some Qur'anic words. He adds that they are happy to find an unknown poetic line. He comments that this practice surprises him and that, whereas they regard this unknown poetic line as an indication of the correctness of the Qur'anic words, the right method would have been the opposite (i.e., to authenticate the words of the poetic lines on the grounds that they are found in the Qur'an).[185]

The grammarians, in fact, could not deal with all the constructions found in the Qur'an and its readings. 'Uḍaymah finds examples of their objecting to certain kinds of *i'rāb,* although they are found in the Qur'an.[186] He adds that they objected to any reading if it did not correspond with their analogy, if they could not find substantiation for it according to their knowledge, and if it did not agree with what is in common usage, or because they misunderstood certain *qirā'āt* (although they are successive readings and are in accordance with their analogy).[187]

In conclusion, we may say that *ikhtiyār* was not left to individual choice, but depended upon the three conditions for acceptability discussed above. It was in no way dependent upon the orthography of the *maṣāḥif* or related to the fact that they were undotted and unvocalized. And although accepted readings may differ in meaning, they do not contradict one another. Since the Qur'an was revealed in seven *aḥruf*, all of them are good Arabic, none should be rejected on grammatical grounds. In practice some grammarians, particularly those of Baṣrah, may have rejected certain read-

183. *Nashr*, 1:114.
184. *Fatḥ al Bārī*, 7:25f.
185. Al Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al Ghayb*, 3:193.
186. 'Uḍaymah, *Dirāsāt li Uslūb al Qur'ān al Karīm*, 1:5-13.
187. *Ibid.*, 22-25.

ings on the grounds of their analogy. Nevertheless, these readings are valid on the basis of other dialects, and other grammarians have accepted them.

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

This conclusion briefly reviews the main issues discussed in the preceeding seven chapters.

First, the Qur'an has been revealed in seven *aḥruf*. The differences among the Companions apparently arose after the Hijrah to Madīnah, when the number of Muslims from various tribes increased, and the *aḥruf* were intended to facilitate the reading of the Qur'an among them.

The *aḥādīth* that substantiate the revelation of the Qur'an in seven *aḥruf* are regarded as sound and successive (*mutawātir*).

The term *seven aḥruf* means seven linguistical variations reflecting various Arab dialects used in reciting the Qur'an.

To aid the memories of the Companions, the Prophet would have scribes write down what was revealed to him in verses or portions on materials available at the time. (Many of the Companions knew by heart all or parts of the Qur'an; some even had their own codices.) The Qur'an was thus preserved in the hearts of the *Qurrā'* as well as in book form.

The first development was that Abū Bakr gathered the Qur'an from its *suḥuf* and different materials, as it had been transmitted from the Prophet, and compiled them in the *muṣḥaf*. The word *muṣḥaf* denotes the entire text of the Qur'an (this title was given to the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet). It is an ancient Arabic word used in pre-Islamic poetry.

The next step was the compilation of 'Uthmān, who copied *maṣāḥif* from the *muṣḥaf* of Abū Bakr and distributed them to the metropolitan cities accompanied by distinguished *Qurrā'* to teach the people accordingly. The purpose was to unite them and end disputes among the people in the encampments, the *amṣār*, and in Madīnah itself. Hence, 'Uthmān destroyed the personal codices. The arrangement of the surahs as well as the verses in the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* are shown by many sound reports to be based on the revelation because they were found in the original and supported by their transmission from the Prophet.

The problem of *naksh* is studied along with the two episodes of the *gharānīq* and the scribe who is said to have altered the *fawāṣil* (the verse endings of the Qur'an). As a result, the completeness and trustworthiness of the Qur'an has been demonstrated because nothing is missing nor were any parts read and abrogated by *naskh al tilāwah* either with or without *ḥukm*.

As to the relation between the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* and the seven *aḥruf*, the most acceptable two opinions among the scholars are that the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* accommodate either all or some of the *aḥruf*, which correspond with the orthography of the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* (including what is transmitted by *tawātur* but not *āḥād* readings attributed to certain personal codices and transmitted to us in unauthentic chains). The *maṣāḥif* were recorded in one *ḥarf* with the permission to recite in seven *aḥruf*.

The additional interpolations attributed to the personal codices are found to be their own explanations and interpretations. They all are generally isolated reports (*akhbār āḥād*), dubious, or rejected.

The accounts alleging that Ubayy added to his *muṣḥaf* the *du'ā' al qunūt* as one or two surahs and that Ibn Mas'ūd denied *al Fātiḥah* and *al Mu'awwidhatayn* are to be regarded as unauthentic.

The 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* remained unchanged, without vocalization or dottings, for they used to be read soundly according to the *riwāyah* and teaching of the *Qurrā'*. The former was introduced by Abū al Aswad al Du'alī as a result of the appearance of *laḥn*, because of the overwhelming numbers of non-Arabs in Iraq. The second was done by the students of Abū al Aswad at the request of al Ḥajjāj during the reign of 'Abd al Malik Ibn Marwān.

The signs of vocalization and dottings were further developed with the adoption of the *ḥarakāt* of al Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad and have remained unchanged since then. What can be attributed to al Ḥajjāj is no more than adding *naqṭ al i'jām* to the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif*. Thus, he introduced no alteration or recension of the *maṣāḥif*, and the printed *maṣāḥif* of the present day represent the received text of the Qur'an without alteration.

The language in which the Qur'an has been revealed is studied in ancient as well as in modern linguistical sources to investigate the views of the scholars. The text of the Qur'an is found to reflect the influence of various dialects of the Arabs. The views of the scholars who interpret the seven *aḥruf* as seven dialects also are examined. Some scholars held that they belong entirely to Quraysh or to the most fluent dialects of all the Arabs, and they differed according to their criteria for fluency. An attempt

is made to distinguish between *lughah* and *lahjah* in ancient sources and modern studies.

The language of the Qur'an is concluded to represent the common spoken literary language of the Arabs ,which is based on all their dialects with a predominance of Qurayshī features.

The origin of *qirā'āt* is investigated, and it is concluded that they date back to the teaching of the Prophet, for we find that every Companion, when he differed in readings with someone, would say that the Prophet had taught him this way. The following generation taught the Qur'an accordingly. Accepted readings are found to correspond with certain conditions, while readings that do not correspond with them (or any one of them) are regarded as *shādhdh* (dubious) or completely unaccepted. The development of these conditions is studied. The theory of reading the Qur'an in accordance with the meaning is shown to be groundless; rather the *Qurrā'* would teach their students according to the conditions governing them and as they received the *qirā'ah* from the Companions who were taught it from the Prophet (bearing in mind the fact that the Companions, whenever they differed in reading, would refer their reading to the Prophet or come to him to arbitrate between them).

The first compilers of *qirā'āt* would compile an unspecified number of *qirā'āt*. Ibn Mujāhid was the first to introduce the seven readings of the seven *Qurrā'* of the distinguished *Amṣār,* regarding the other readings as *shādhdh.* In choosing this specific number, although it corresponded to the number of *aḥruf,* he never intended to confuse the seven *aḥruf* with his seven readings.

The seven readings compiled by Ibn Mujāhid were adopted in the *amṣār* and dominated the circles of the *Qurrā',* although another three readings in addition to Ibn Mujāhid's *al Sab'ah* were supported and strongly argued to have the same position as his seven. Many books have been written on the subject.

Ikhtiyār, or selection, in reading is considered next. The *Qurrā'* do not have free hand in this, because any reading should be subject to correspondence with *riwāyah,* the orthography of the *maṣāḥif,* and the Arabic language. The emphasis is on substantiating the fact that the 'Uthmānic *maṣāḥif* include no grammatical or orthographical errors. The *Qurrā',* when they selected certain readings, supported their choice by mentioning the reasons behind their preference for a certain *ikhtiyār.* But they did not reject other accepted readings.

Although the philologists and grammarians agreed theoretically that any reading agreeing with the conditions for accepted readings should not be objected to, in practice they disagreed on the degree of

fluency required. Some of them objected to certain authentic and highly esteemed readings. This book has studied examples and concluded that they are accepted readings on the grounds of their sound transmission, fluency, and correspondence with various Arab dialects.

Finally, although the sound readings may differ in meaning, they do not contradict each other. The orthography of the *maṣāḥif* preserves the authentic readings, which are subject to the *riwāyah*, and the orthography itself does not initiate or create any readings.

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